



# PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

## BUTTE-SILVER BOW





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The planning team would like to thank the community members who participated in great number and with considerable enthusiasm in the public process that led to this plan.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The City-County of Butte-Silver Bow is excited to present the first comprehensive plan for the future of the park, trail and open space system. The Butte-Silver Bow Park, Trails and Open Space Plan is the result of an engaged community, with the desire to create a park system that addresses the unique needs of the community. This planning effort has resulted in a vision for Butte-Silver Bow's park system, as well as recommendations for achieving that vision. The plan identifies and evaluates existing park and recreation areas; assesses the need for additional park land, recreation facilities and operational needs; and establishes goals, objectives and recommendations for the entire park system.

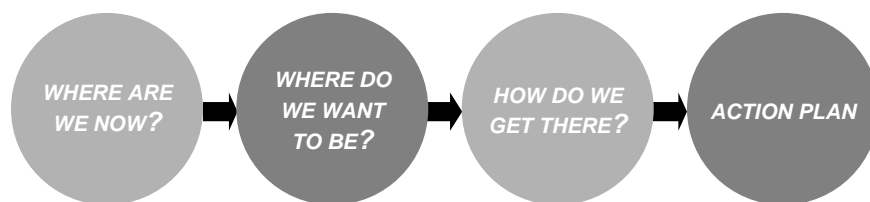


Butte-Silver Bow has a unique history, and is surrounded by natural resources that provide nearly limitless opportunity for outdoor recreation. The head-frames that dot Butte's skyline reveal a history as the nation's premier copper mining area and serve as markers of the sites of some of the most important social struggles of the last century. City-County residents are proud of this history and have already developed many unique ways to tell this story. Through this plan, the community can build on the historic identity, provide a wide range of recreation opportunities and create a park system that solidifies Butte-Silver Bow as a destination and a vibrant place to live.

## PLAN PROCESS

The planning process for this plan was divided into four phases as detailed below (Figure 1). Taken together, these phases create a functional plan that can be used to guide the preferred park and recreation system of the Butte-Silver Bow area.

**Figure 1: Planning Phases**



The first phase inventoried and analyzed the existing park and recreation system which helped identify park and recreation needs for the Butte-Silver Bow area. The community needs analysis was another critical piece in developing the Park, Trails and Open Space



Plan. This phase analyzed findings from community input and recreation trends, which identified needs and formulated policy directions. The third phase developed system-wide goals, objectives, and recommendations for improving parks, facilities, and programs throughout the city-county. This step also included the implementation section which outlines a logical community decision-making process for park improvements, and provides strategies for funding these projects. The final phase of this process includes refinement of the plan and plan adoption.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

Community input for the Park, Trails and Open Space Plan is based on a series of community workshops, interviews and data analysis that have been used to identify the needs of the community. The purpose of this effort is to ensure the participation of a diverse cross-section of the community. The public involvement process included the following:

### *PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEES*

The planning process included four separate meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Planning Advisory Committee (PAC). The TAC provided plan direction and guidance. The committee was made up of key City-County staff people to review the plan from a more technical point of view. The PAC advisory group represented a wider range of recreation interests in the community and also provided guidance for the plan. The PAC included members from the Parks Board and a few key partners from the community.

### *COMMUNITY WORKSHOP*

Over 130 individuals attended a community workshop on March 10th, 2008. The purpose of the community workshop was to inform the public of the planning process, discuss both the existing and preferred park and recreation system, and create a common vision to guide the plan. The workshop used several different tools and strategies to gain input from the community. These included interactive visual displays, group discussion, and small working groups. The activities focused: on the strengths, challenges and opportunities for parks in Butte Silver-Bow; elements of an ideal park; and concepts for the park system as a whole. The workshop resulted in key themes that included the following:

- Find and secure appropriate funding;
- Focus on improving and maintaining existing parks;
- Provide facilities for all ages; and
- Provide trail connections.





### *FOCUS GROUPS*

The plan was also informed by a series of four focus group meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit input in areas of special interest including tennis, golf, ATV/motorcyclists and area schools. Recognizing aquatics as a special focus of this plan, the planning team also held an additional meeting to discuss existing aquatic facilities and the desire for additional pools and water play in the area. Key findings of these meetings included the following:

- There is a strong interest in additional facilities, both indoor and outdoor;
- There is no clear path from idea to implementation;
- Make the best use of any existing facilities and potential partners; and
- There is additional need for activities and opportunities for youth.

### *SPORTS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE*

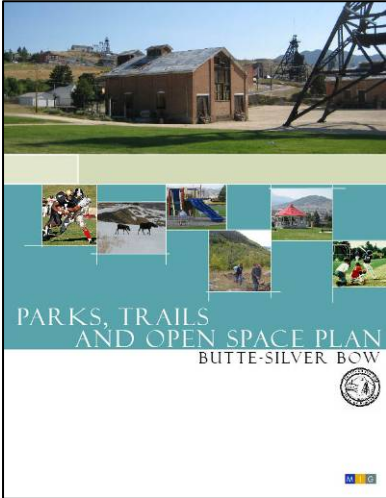
A questionnaire specifically targeting competitive sports field use was distributed by the planning team to each of the organized sports groups. The questionnaire helped assess the demand that these groups generate for field and gymnasium use. It also elicited input regarding current facility conditions and future needs. Data from this paper questionnaire helped identify the current need for sports facilities, as well as the need to develop guidelines or standards for future facility needs.



### *NEEDS ASSESSMENT PRESENTATION*

Over 80 individuals attended a second public meeting presenting the results of the community needs assessment on July 29th, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to answer questions related to the park plan, gather additional information about identified needs and identify other ideas in the community. The meeting was primarily a presentation of the results of the needs assessment, outlining the need for park land, recreation facilities and a special focus on aquatics facilities. Major themes that surfaced from the meeting included:

- Upgrade existing sports facilities;
- Expand the trail network;
- Conduct a market study before considering a new pool;
- Consider development of a dog park; and
- Provide recreation opportunities for all ages and all seasons.



## PLAN ORGANIZATION

This plan has been organized to be easy to follow and understand in order to ensure that Butte-Silver Bow's Park, Trails and Open Space Plan effectively serves the park and recreation needs of the area. The plan is divided into six chapters, as detailed below.

- Chapter 1:     **Introduction:** The plan begins with this introduction, which defines the vision for the Butte-Silver Bow park system, provides an overview of the planning process and public involvement efforts, and notes the organization of the plan.
- Chapter 2:     **Existing Conditions:** a review of existing park and recreation conditions. This chapter provides an in-depth look at the community and planning area, the City-County organization, existing parkland, open space and recreation facilities, as well as other recreation providers.
- Chapter 3:     **Community Needs:** identifies key findings from the community involvement process and summarizes challenges and opportunities for the park system.
- Chapter 4:     **Planning Framework:** takes the identified community needs and crafts these concepts into a system-wide vision with goals and objectives. (These elements also form a planning framework for the recommendations that appear in the following chapters.)
- Chapter 5:     **Recommendations:** presents the projects necessary to achieve the vision and goals of this plan. These projects address capital needs, department organization, project evaluation, and maintaining and operating parks and facilities.
- Chapter 6:     **Implementation:** the plan's final chapter provides the immediate action items that the community should address. The chapter lays out strategies for capacity building, community decision making and funding priority projects.

Three appendices contain the following additional information:

Appendix A: **Park Inventory:** A listing of all Butte-Silver Bow parks and other key recreation sites. The inventory details the size, category and facilities found at each site.

Appendix B: **Complete Project List:** A complete inventory of projects identified by the planning team and the community during the planning process. Each project is briefly described and the goals that apply are indicated.

Appendix C: **Design Guidelines:** Guidelines to assist in the selection of park sites and the types of amenities to provide or avoid in each park type. The standards also include development standards for multiple types of trails.



## 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter summarizes Butte-Silver Bow's park and recreation system today. It describes the planning area, provides an overview of the community—including demographics—and summarizes city park lands, park facilities and other recreation resources.

### PLANNING AREA

The Comprehensive Park, Trails and Open Space Plan addresses park and facility needs in all of Silver Bow County in southwestern Montana. The City of Butte is the center of the City-County government, and contains the majority of the County's population. As a result, this plan will result in a special emphasis on the City of Butte. Maps 1 and 2 show the planning area in greater detail.



### COMMUNITY PROFILE

Butte-Silver Bow was first settled in 1864 when miners were attracted to Silver Bow Creek. While it was gold that first brought the miners, it was the discovery of copper that put Butte on the map. Butte, with the richest copper deposit in the nation, had over 200 mines in the area. When mining technology shifted to open pit mining, Berkeley Pit opened in 1955. As the three-mile-wide pit expanded, many existing neighborhoods were demolished. When the pit closed in 1982, naturally-flowing highly acidic mine water began to fill the 1,800 foot deep pit.

Silver Bow County is 719 square miles of primarily mountainous, high altitude terrain. The planning area lies within the 474 square mile Silver Bow Creek watershed. Decades of mining have resulted in extensive degradation. Portions of the watershed have been designated as federal Superfund sites. In a 1999 settlement with ARCO, the state received \$130 million in natural resource funds to restore or replace damaged resources. The Silver Bow Creek Watershed Restoration Plan (2005), which lays out funding priorities for the settlement money, includes several park and recreation projects. Butte area residents have not had access to a variety of recreational features as a result of mining activities and contamination. For this reason, the restoration plan recommends development of recreational facilities such as parks, open space, swimming areas, fishing areas and trails.

Butte is surrounded by four million acres of public lands, including the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, and Bureau of Land Management and State of Montana lands. The continental divide runs through Silver Bow County, looping around Butte. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail traverses the forest and provides

excellent hiking opportunities. Public lands also include trails for equestrian, all-terrain vehicle and mountain bike use. Rock climbers are drawn to the granite outcrops found in the Humbug Spires Wilderness Study Area south of Butte and in the Pipestone area east of Butte.



The Big Hole River, thirty minutes away, is noted for its natural diversity. The river supports rainbow, brown, cutthroat and brook trout and also offers great floating and kayaking experiences. Other streams found in the Butte area include the Beaverhead, Ruby, Madison, Jefferson and Rock Creeks.

In the winter the area offers snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and downhill skiing at Discovery Basin near Anaconda, as well as Maverick Mountain near Dillon.

Several major transportation corridors intersect in Butte. Butte lies at the intersection of Interstates 15 and 90, the state's two interstate highways. The area also hosts a rail interline with the Burlington Northern and Union Pacific Railroads.

The largest employers in the County are the local, State and Federal governments, together providing 17% of all jobs. The largest private employers in the area include St. James Health Care, Northwestern Energy, Wal-Mart, Town Pump and Montana Resources.

### *DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS*

Understanding the demographics of the Butte-Silver Bow planning area is critical for determining needs for parks and recreation services. Factors such as age and ethnicity influence community preferences for recreation activities. Population growth and distribution is also an important factor in the demand for parks and recreation opportunities. Census data was used to produce a demographic summary of Butte-Silver Bow. Since the US Census does not separate the City of Butte from Silver Bow County, the numbers reported here are for Silver Bow County. Demographic information was also pulled from the 2005 Butte-Silver Bow Transportation Plan Update.

## POPULATION

According to Census data, the population of Silver Bow County in 2000 was 34,606. Approximately 88 percent (30,453) of Silver Bow's population resided within the Butte urban limits. The population of the County increased two percent (665 people) between 1990 and 2000. During the 2005 Butte-Silver Bow Transportation Plan Update, population growth was projected to 2025. The modest growth scenario projected 36,801 residents of the county by 2025 representing a growth rate of 6.3 percent. Extending this projection to a 20-year planning horizon ending in 2028 would result in a population of approximately 37,078.

Table 1: Population and Projection

SOURCE	POPULATION
2000 Census	34,606
2028 Planning Horizon Projection	37,078

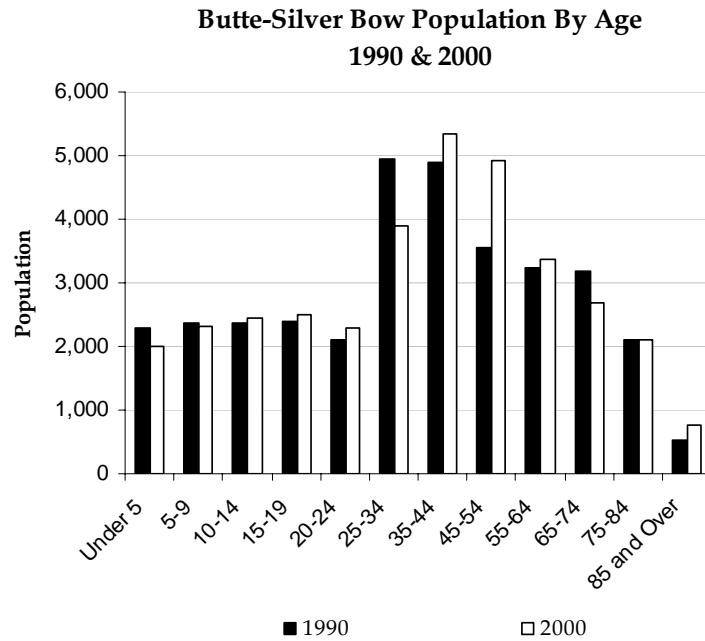
Because of the inter-jurisdictional boundaries for the City-County of Butte-Silver Bow it is difficult to extract data from the U.S. Census. However, it appears that the area with largest amount of growth (62 percent) is outside of the Butte urban core. (This does include some areas within, but at the edges of the City limits.)

## AGE

The age distribution in Silver-Bow County has shifted between 1990 and 2000, as shown in Figure 2.1 on the next page. The number of children under five decreased by 13 percent. At the same time, the number of residents age 25-34 declined 22 percent. The two shifts may reflect a decrease in residents of child-bearing age and their children. The largest age groups are between the ages of 35-54, representing 30 percent of the population. The number of residents over age 85 has increased 48 percent.

An aging population is consistent with national trends and will affect the types of facilities and recreation programs needed in the planning area. Older adults and seniors are participating in recreation activities in much larger numbers than in previous generations.

Figure 2.1: Butte-Silver Bow Age Distribution



## ETHNICITY

Historically, Butte has a reputation as a diverse mining town. During the high tide of mass immigration, the town had more foreign-born residents than many European cities. By 1910, immigrants came from over two dozen nations, including Ireland, England and Finland.

Recent census data mask this type of diversity in the collection of all Caucasians into one population, representing 93% of the county in 2000. Ethnic groups that have increased their presence between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses include African Americans and American Indians.



## PARK LAND

The City-County of Butte-Silver Bow provides a variety of park land inside the County limits. These sites are designed, owned, and maintained by the City-County of Butte-Silver Bow, and range from sports parks to open space areas. Over the years Butte-Silver Bow has acquired parks through a variety of methods, including subdivision dedication, donation and tax deed sale. Another major source of park land in this community has been the remediation of former mine sites. Altogether, the City-County's park sites total 356.6 acres of developed and undeveloped park land that provide both active and passive recreation opportunities for residents of Butte-Silver Bow and the surrounding areas (Map 1 shows the Butte area, and Map 2 illustrates the entire county).

## CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

To assist in planning for the future of Butte-Silver Bow, parks have been divided into six classifications. These park classifications recognize that parks are used in a variety of ways and serve different purposes within the system. These classifications can facilitate future planning, reduce conflicts between user groups, and help define appropriate maintenance levels. The six park types include the following:

### MINI PARKS

Mini parks are typically located on small lots up to three acres in size. These parks are designed to serve residents within a ¼-mile walking radius, or in immediately adjacent neighborhoods. Mini parks provide basic neighborhood recreation amenities, like playgrounds, benches, and landscaping. Typical mini parks are up to approximately ½-acre in size but are distinguished primarily by the minimal basic facilities provided within them. Most of the mini parks are clustered in the Uptown area, such as Hanna Park and Peace Park. In addition to the parks managed by Butte-Silver Bow, there are two other mini parks in the City limits: Walkerville Park and Williamsburg Park.



### NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks are located within walking and bicycling distance of most users. These parks are generally three to five acres in size and also serve residents within a ¼-mile walking distance. Neighborhood parks provide access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents, enhance neighborhood identity and preserve neighborhood open space. Neighborhood parks often include amenities such as playgrounds, basketball courts, turf areas, picnic tables, and benches. The largest neighborhood park is Chester Steele Park. Other sites that provide neighborhood park service include Koprivica Park and many of the elementary schools. At Whittier

Elementary and at Ramsay School, Butte-Silver Bow provides maintenance to the school yards that include a variety of recreation facilities. These school sites act as neighborhood parks, however the City-County still has limited control over these sites

## COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are planned to provide opportunities for structured or active, and passive or informal recreation. Community parks generally include facilities that attract people from the entire community, such as pools, lighted fields and recreation centers. As destinations, these sites require support facilities, such as parking and restrooms. These parks may also include significant open space areas and trails. The minimum size of community parks is generally 15 to 20 acres. Community parks with large facilities, such as golf courses, or extensive open space areas may be considerably larger. The City-County currently operates three community parks: Clark Park, Father Sheehan Park and Stodden Park.



## SPECIAL USE AREAS

Special use areas are freestanding specialized use facilities, such as community centers, aquatic centers, sports complexes, boat ramps, historic areas or skate parks. Since special use areas vary widely in function, there are no minimum sizes. However, special use areas must be large enough to accommodate the intended use. Support facilities, such as parking and restrooms, are often included. Butte-Silver Bow currently has eleven special use areas. Three of these parks include skating rinks and seven include ball parks. Copper Mountain Youth Park, located just west of the Butte City limits, is the largest special use park with 73.5 acres and multiple sports fields.



## OPEN SPACE AREAS

Open space parks are permanent, undeveloped natural areas which are managed for both their natural value, as well as for recreational use. Open space areas and greenways can be of any size, and may include wetlands, wildlife habitats or stream corridors. Open space areas provide opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as bird-watching and environmental education. These parks may preserve or protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as unique/endangered plant species. Other types of open space areas provide for access and enjoyment of forest lands and other natural features. Greenways are often linear in nature, following natural or man-made corridors, such as creeks and abandoned railways. At the present time, the City-County of Butte-Silver Bow owns Big Butte, Blacktail Creek and Basin Creek Reservoir Park. Thompson Park, a 3,500-acre congressionally designated municipal recreation area, is co-owned and managed with the U.S. Forest Service.



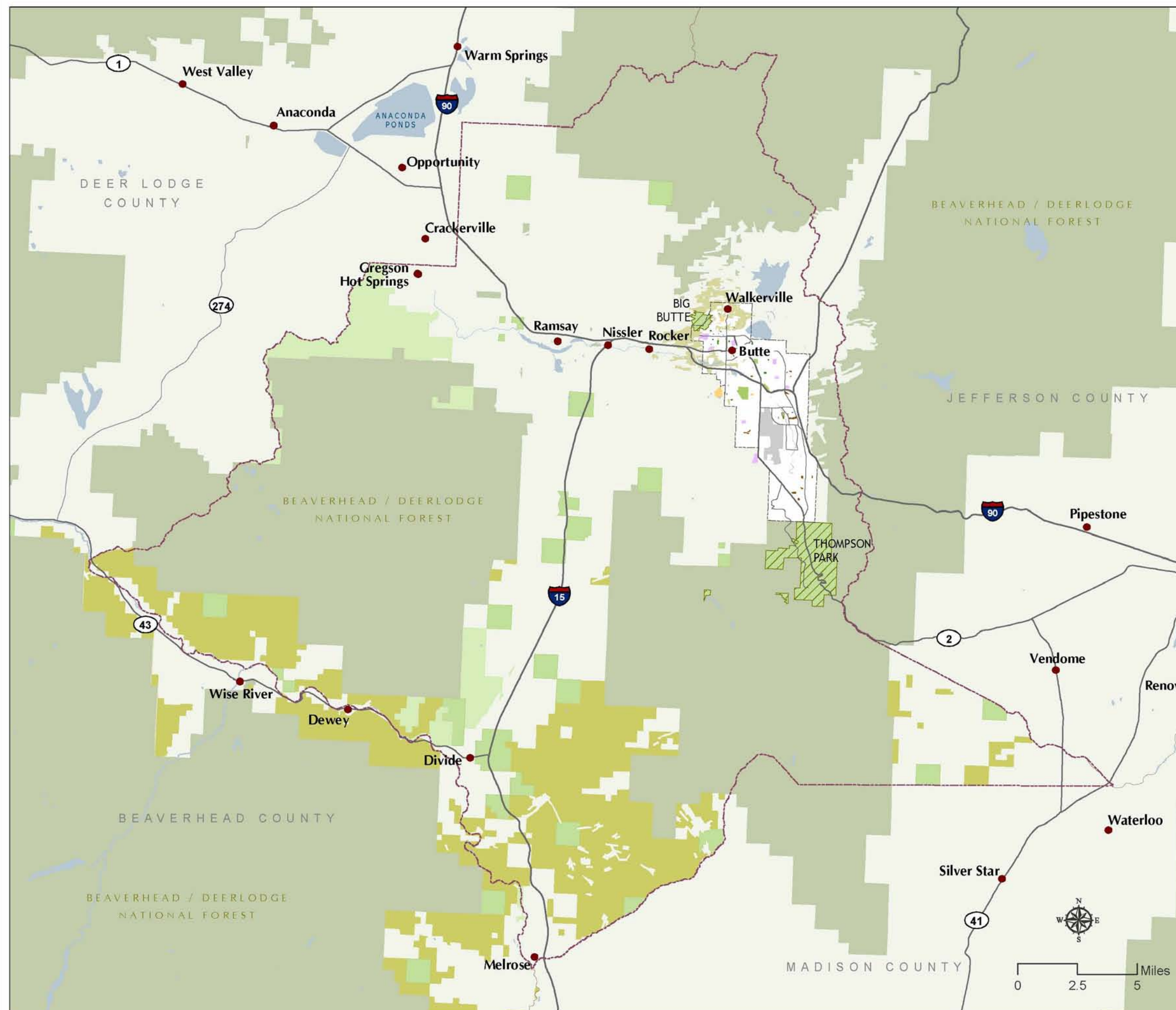








**Butte - Silver Bow  
Parks, Trails, & Open Space  
Comprehensive Plan**  
City of Butte, Montana



**Map 2: Silver Bow County**



January 2009 Data Source: Butte - Silverbow  
GIS & Montana GIS Clearinghouse



## UNDEVELOPED AREAS

Undeveloped areas are public lands with no facilities or improvements. These sites are intended to be developed into a park in one of the above categories in the future. A wide variety of land has been included in the undeveloped park category. Most of the sites are land that was dedicated to the City-County for park use but has yet to be developed. Some of these sites are suitable for park uses but many are leftover, undevelopable properties or are in poor locations for a developed park.

## MINE/SUPERFUND SITES

An important subset of the undeveloped park category is the mine/Superfund land, which includes a large amount of land all around Uptown Butte. The total acreage of the “dedicated” mine/Superfund lands that are likely to become part of the park system is nearly 2,200 acres. While the final use of these lands is still under consideration, much of the property is remediated land that cannot be developed. Other parcels in this category include mine structures such as head-frames and equipment houses that could be reused.



## *SUMMARY OF PARK LAND*

At the present time, the City-County of Butte-Silver Bow owns and manages 276 acres of developed park land (Table 2). The parks range in size from one tenths of an acre to 309 acres. Butte-Silver Bow also manages open space areas and undeveloped park land including Thompson Park—a 3,500-acre forested park south of Butte that is co-owned and co-managed with the U.S. Forest Service. Additional acreage and recreational amenities, including land and buildings, are owned and maintained by Montana Tech, local school districts and other organizations such as the YMCA. The acreage provided by others is not included in the table, but should be acknowledged as these sites provide important recreation opportunities in Butte-Silver Bow. A detailed park inventory is found in Appendix A.

Table 2: Existing Park Land

Park Type	Existing Parks	Acres	Existing Level Of Service <sup>a</sup> (Acres Per 1,000 Persons)
Mini Parks	11	3.64	0.11
Neighborhood Parks	7	17.12	0.49
Community Parks	3	153.48	4.44
Special Use Areas	11	102.01	2.95
Subtotal: Developed Park Land	32	276.25	7.99
Open space Areas/Greenways	4	4167.42	120.42 <sup>B</sup>
Undeveloped Park Land	N/A	47.86	1.38
Mine Sites and Superfund Property	N/A	2196.39	63.47
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>6687.92</b>	<b>193.26</b>

<sup>A</sup> Based on the 2000 population of the City-County of Butte-Silver Bow as reported by the U. S. Census Bureau

<sup>B</sup> The level of service without including Thompson Park is 10.44

Table 2 is a summary of existing park land by type within Butte-Silver Bow, showing both the number of sites and the total acreage in each proposed classification. The table also includes calculations of the level of park service provided by the City-County described in terms of acres per 1,000 population, based on the County population from the 2000 Census.



## RECREATION FACILITIES

In addition to providing and maintaining park land, the City-County of Butte-Silver Bow is also responsible for the development and maintenance of various recreation facilities within its borders. Currently, the city provides sports fields, and other athletic facilities including outdoor basketball courts, a skate park, tennis and volleyball courts, ice skating rinks, and a golf course. The City-County also provides various park amenities which are summarized in Table 3. A more detailed inventory is included in Appendix A.

Table 3: Summary of Butte-Silver Bow Recreation Facilities

	City-County	Other	Total
<b>SPORTS FIELDS</b>			
Baseball Fields	22	3	25
Football Fields	4	6	10
Soccer Fields	0	13	13
<b>OTHER ATHLETIC FACILITIES</b>			
Outdoor Basketball Courts	6.5	11.5	18
Skate Parks	1	0	1
Tennis Courts	11	12	23
Volleyball Courts	3	3	6
Ice Skating Rinks	6	2	8
Golf Course	1	2	3
<b>INDOOR FACILITIES</b>			
Gymnasiums	0	14	14
Weight Room/Fitness Centers	0	6	6
<b>OTHER PARK AMENITIES</b>			
Horseshoe Pits	2	0	2
Group Picnic Areas	5	0	5
Playgrounds	15	9	24
Restrooms	5	0	5
<b>AQUATIC FACILITIES</b>			
Pools	0	6	6

The recreation facilities within the City-County of Butte-Silver Bow have been designed and developed to serve particular functions. In order to facilitate future planning, the following section provides a definition for each recreational facility followed by a description of the available facilities.

### TRAILS

Butte-Silver Bow has a number of trails within its parks, as well as trails that connect to surrounding open spaces. Copper Mountain Youth Park, McGruff/Manning Park and Father Sheehan Park all

feature internal looping trails. The Copperway Trails and Butte Heritage Park Trails are a network of non-vehicular trails linking a variety of cultural sites. Other trails lead into surrounding areas and include a trail along the Butte Anaconda Pacific railroad corridor, and Silver Bow Creek Greenway Trails. When completed, the Maud S Canyon Trail will also connect the urban trail system to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

## AQUATIC FACILITIES

Aquatic facilities typically include pools and other opportunities for water play, such as spray features, water parks and wading pools. These facilities vary in size and depth according to intended age group and use. They may be located both indoors and outdoors, and may be recreational or competition-oriented in nature. Recreational pools often include water features designed for use by different age groups, such as slides or spray elements.



### *EXISTING AQUATIC FACILITIES*

The only City-County owned aquatic facility in Butte-Silver Bow is a wading pool in Chester Steele Park. However, there are six pools in the area. There is a six-lane 25-meter indoor pool at Montana Tech, an outdoor recreational pool at the Butte County Club and two hot spring pools (indoor and outdoor) at Fairmont Hot Springs, 15 miles west of Butte. The Butte Family YMCA includes an indoor eight-lane lap pool and a zero-depth entry family pool with two water slides.

The publically owned pool at Stodden Park was permanently closed in 2006, because the age and condition of the pool had passed the point where repairs were cost-effective. Residents of Butte-Silver Bow voted to contribute the funding used to operate the Stodden Park Pool, staffed under contract by the YMCA, to the new indoor YMCA facility. As part of this agreement, the pool at the YMCA is open to the public with no membership requirement.

### 3. COMMUNITY NEEDS

This chapter presents an assessment of the overall community need for park land and recreation facilities. It examines the Butte-Silver Bow park system in terms of park access, park acreage and the number of park facilities serving City-County residents. In the context of this geographic and level of service analysis, standards are proposed for park land, and guidelines are proposed for specific types of recreation facilities in order to determine park and facility needs for the future. The standards and guidelines are based on needs identified for the park system through the year 2028.

This chapter is organized into the following sections:

- Park Land Needs
- Recreation Facility Needs
- Aquatics Needs
- Organization and Operational Needs

Additional details about the determination of the needs for park land and recreation facilities are available in the Community Needs Assessment report, under separate cover.

#### PARK LAND NEEDS

Community input indicates that a system of parks and trails in close proximity to area residents is important. As such, this analysis factors walking or biking distance to parks as a way to determine how much park land is needed in Butte-Silver Bow. Another factor in this analysis identifies the needed amount of open space and recreation facilities based on the type of opportunities and experiences desired by residents. These basic premises provide the foundation for the methods used in this analysis. The analysis of park land follows the classification of park types in Butte-Silver Bow, presented in Chapter 2.



#### *METHODOLOGY*

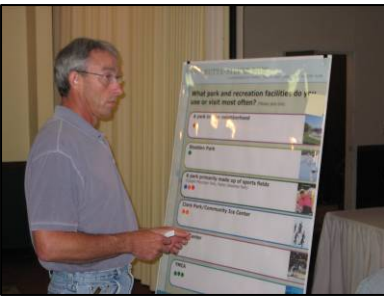
This section used several tools to determine current and future need for parkland in Butte-Silver Bow. The needs analysis determines public preferences for recreation opportunities; compares the amount of park land in Butte-Silver Bow to other agencies; compares existing levels of service and proposed park standards to comparable agencies; and analyzes the geographic distribution of park service areas and access points. This section explains these tools, and provides definitions of terms used in the methodology and population estimates.

- *Review of Public Involvement Findings/Trends:* Results from the public involvement process were used in the development of this chapter to support conclusions about the demand for and use of various types of parks and facilities.
- *Standards Analysis:* Comparisons to other park and recreation agencies in Montana provide a way to gauge as to where Butte-Silver Bow's existing level of service (LOS) and proposed standards for park land are above or below the norm.
- *Access Analysis:* The geographical distribution of parks and park access were considered to determine the need for some types of parks and recreation facilities within the planning area. This analysis considers travel distance, barriers, transportation modes and park entrance points in determining park access.

### *PUBLIC INPUT KEY FINDINGS*

Public input guided the recommended standards for each park type. This chapter also bases the needs analysis from key findings identified during the community involvement process, which include:

- Long-term residents expressed concern over Butte-Silver Bow's inability to maintain mini parks, eventually leading to vacant or nearly vacant lots;
- Many citizens felt that community parks are at the center of attention;
- Workshop participants felt that the "ideal park" is typically a large park with many features;
- Citizens felt that competitive sports facilities have been the focus of the park system;
- Residents noted that facilities could be combined to increase efficiency;
- Citizens stated that one-season facilities are an eyesore during the rest of the year;
- Citizens expressed the ability of walking out of a neighborhood into a natural area as an important feature;
- Citizens felt that connections to open space areas are needed, including trailheads and signage; and
- Citizens also felt that large public land holdings including National Forest lands are key to many activities, from hiking to ATVs to snowshoeing.



## STANDARDS ANALYSIS

This analysis compares the existing level of service in Butte-Silver Bow Park land to standards for two Montana communities: Helena and Kalispell. In nearly all categories, the Butte-Silver Bows park system provides less park land per thousand people, with the exception of community parks which fall between the standards of the two communities. Overall, the provision of local parks (mini, neighborhood and community parks) falls considerably behind these comparable communities.

## PARK ACCESS

Park access is a key criterion in establishing an appropriate level of service for the provision of park land. In Butte-Silver Bow, the need for park access is based on the assumption that basic park services should be provided within walking distance ( $\frac{1}{4}$  mile) of all Butte residents. Less densely developed communities also need access to park land but houses on larger lots in a more sparse development pattern cannot efficiently be served within walking distance. In addition, larger yards can fulfill some park related needs, and the need for parks in close proximity becomes less important.

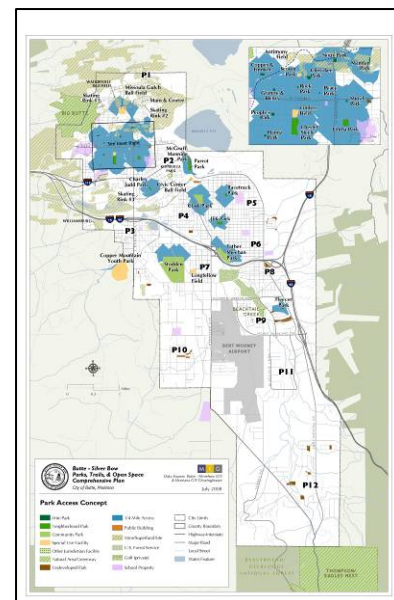
A geographic analysis of the Butte-Silver Bow park system indicates that the Uptown area is extensively covered by mini and neighborhood parks with many overlapping service areas. In the central eastern area of Butte, north of Interstate 15, a smaller number of relatively larger parks provide more evenly spaced coverage for local residents.

Park coverage is considerably less complete in the area south of Interstate 15, with only a few isolated areas within  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile of a developed park. With the exception of the small Fleecer Park, nearly all of Butte south of Stodden Park does not have access to parks within walking distance.

## PARK LAND NEED SUMMARY

This analysis used several methods to determine how much park land is needed in Butte-Silver Bow. Public input, park standards and park access can all identify the average amount of park acreage needed per population. This defined park land to population ratio is known as park land level of service (LOS).

The park land analysis developed existing level of service and recommended standards—expressed in terms of acres of land per 1,000 persons in the County—for each park type (no standard was



proposed for open space areas or undeveloped park land. These ratios are summarized below.

Table 1: Summary of Park Land Service Levels

Park Type	Existing Level of Service	Recommended Level of Service Standard
Mini Parks	0.11/1,000 persons	0.08/1,000 persons
Neighborhood Parks	0.49/1,000 persons	1.54/1,000 persons
Community Parks	4.44/1,000 persons	5.76/1,000 persons
Special Use Areas	2.95/1,000 persons	2.95/1,000 persons
Total	7.99/1,000 persons	10.33/1,000 persons
Open Space Areas	120.42/1,000 persons	N/A
Undeveloped Park Land	64.85/1,000 persons	N/A

Based on the proposed standards, the acreage needed currently (2008) and at the end of the planning horizon (2028) can be determined. The net need is the total amount of park land that should be added to the existing park acreage by 2028 to meet the recommended level of service. Table 2 summarizes these figures by park type.

Table 2: Current and Future Park Land Needs (Acres)

Park Type	Existing Park Land	Current Land Need 2008	Future Land Need 2028	Net Land Need 2028
Mini Parks	3.64	2.77	2.97	(0.68)
Neighborhood Parks	17.12	53.29	57.10	40.00
Community Parks	153.48	199.33	213.57	60.09
Special Use Areas	102.01	102.01	109.38	7.37
Total	276.25	357.4	383.02	107.46
Open Spaces	4,167.42	N/A	N/A	N/A
Undeveloped Park	2,244.25	N/A	N/A	N/A

The analysis identified a need for 108 acres of new park land with at least some land needed in each park type except for mini parks. Some of this park land is already in City-County ownership and simply needs to be developed as a park. Other undeveloped park land is dedicated land from the Superfund settlement or other mine lands that will likely become part of the park system (mostly in open space area use).

## RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

Findings from the community involvement process indicated that Butte-Silver Bow is aware that park land alone does not create a complete park system. In addition to park land, recreation facilities create places to play, relax, enjoy nature or participate in community events. This section discusses specific needs for various outdoor recreation facilities. Chapter 2 provides definitions of facility categories used in this section.

- Baseball/softball fields;
- Football fields;
- Soccer fields;
- Trails and pathways;
- Tennis courts;
- Indoor facilities;
- Golf courses;
- Aquatic facilities; and
- Other miscellaneous facilities.



## METHODOLOGY

A variety of tools were used to determine current and future need for recreation facilities in Butte-Silver Bow. These methods included:

- *Review of Public Involvement Findings/Trends:* Results of the public involvement process were used in the development of this section. These data support conclusions about the demand for and use of various types of parks and facilities.
- *Comparison to Other Agencies:* Comparisons to other agencies to help gauge where Butte-Silver Bow's existing level of service (LOS) and proposed guidelines for facilities are above or below the norm.
- *Functional Analysis:* In future park development, a set of design guidelines will guide which facilities are appropriate for sites upon development. These guidelines ensure that parks have the necessary facilities to function appropriately within the park system. The functional analysis will consider typical design guidelines to assist in determining how many facilities should exist in the ideal park system.







- *Geographic Analysis:* The geographical distribution of access routes to facilities was considered to determine the need for additional recreation facilities within the planning area.
- *Connection Analysis:* Connection analysis assesses linkages between parks and other community destinations throughout the City-County to help determine the need for additional trail segments.
- *Sports Field Demand Analysis:* The demand for sport field facilities is determined using data from local sports teams, including the number of practices and games these teams have per week, along with the season(s) the sport is played. The supply of sport fields is determined using data from the parks inventory, including City-County–owned and other fields, and scheduling information from City-County staff. The supply of and demand for fields are compared to determine the current level of need for each type of facility. The analysis also indicates if there is an excess of fields or an under-met demand.
- *Consideration of Facilities Provided by Others:* In some cases, the City-County relies on the use of other providers' facilities to meet community recreation needs. Where numerical guidelines are established, the proposed LOS takes into account the existing level of service for facilities provided by the City-County and others.
- *Determination of a Guideline:* A proposed guideline is calculated based on the existing LOS for all providers. While some facility needs will be met by the City-County alone, many needs will be met by other providers. Additional facilities may be developed through partnerships, collaborations and joint ventures.

### *SUMMARY OF RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS*

In addition to open land, the facilities that support play, learning and exercise are a critical part of the overall park system. This analysis considers a wide range of factors and discusses the community's needs at several levels. Sport fields and trails are addressed with quantitative models including comparisons to similar community standards and supply and demand analysis. Other facilities, which are typically unique in the park system or distributed throughout it, are discussed more generally. Needs for these facilities are based on input from community members, observations by the planning team, as



well as the trends in providing recreation facilities across the western United States.

## SPORT FIELDS

Many of Butte-Silver Bow's parks are primarily made up of sport fields or other sports-related recreation facilities. These facilities are critical to youth and adult organized sports, but are also land-intensive and require considerable maintenance. Therefore it is important that the community provide enough of these facilities, but not more than are needed.

After comparing the Butte-Silver Bow park system against similar communities, examining the supply and demand for facilities, analyzing the function and connections to parks, and considering the public input from a wide range of residents, a proposed level of service guideline was determined for a selection of recreation facilities. Table 3 summarizes the existing level of service and the recommended guidelines for these facilities.

Table 3: Summary of Sport Field Service Levels

Facility Type	Existing Level of Service	Recommended Level of Service Guideline
Baseball/Softball Fields	1 Field/1,193 persons	1 Field/1,200 persons
Football Fields	1 Field/3,461 persons	1 Field/4,000 persons
Soccer Fields	1 Field/2,662 persons	1 Field/2,600 persons

In regard to dedicated sports fields, the analysis showed that the community is well-served by the existing facilities and proposes a guideline based on this existing level of service. The number of new facilities needed during this planning period can be calculated using the proposed standard for both the current and future needs. The results of these calculations are summarized in Table 4, below.

Table 4: Current and Future Sports Field Needs

Park Type	# of Existing Facilities	Current Need 2008	Future Need 2028	Net Need 2028
Baseball/Softball Fields	29	29	31	2
Football Fields	10	9	9	(1)
Soccer Fields	13	13	14	1

As Table 4 shows, currently these facilities essentially provide an appropriate level of service. Most of the small changes in the future could be addressed by upgrading fields to allow more play or changing the type of fields provided. In some cases, the numbers of facilities do not tell the whole story—new fields may be needed for some sports that replace single fields with easier to maintain field complexes.

## TRAILS



In the urban area of Butte, trails provide an enjoyable walking experience, as well as a way to get to community destinations safely. These trails also provide connections from homes to the edge of the City and into the national forest and other public lands that provide a wide variety of recreation opportunities. Trails are also used for activities, such as walking, bicycling, skateboarding, ATV and motorcycle riding, mountain biking, hiking and more.

For ATV use and motorcycle riding, access to the edge of the City and into the open space areas beyond is also an important feature of trails to participants in the focus group. A unique challenge is the desire to accommodate youth who engage in these activities and who are not able to legally drive on public streets, to get to legal ATV or motorcycle-riding areas. The mix of users is also an important topic of public input. In some areas dedicated trails for non-motorized use are required, while in others the trails and pathways can be reasonably shared.

The current level of service for trails in Butte-Silver Bow is equal to 0.56 miles of trail per thousand people.

Based on connectivity analysis and public input, the proposed guideline for trail development is substantially higher than the existing level of service. Demand for trails and trail related activities are high and the area served by the City-County is large. Therefore, the standard was set to promote considerable growth in the trail system. Adding 50 miles of trail to the park and recreation system by 2028 generates a recommended standard of 2 miles per thousand people.

## OTHER FACILITY NEEDS

In addition to the sport fields and trails discussed above, there are numerous other sports and activities that require facilities in the park system. The community needs analysis identified additional facility needs based on the community input and observations of the existing park system. These additional facilities include the following:

- Updated or new playgrounds in underdeveloped parks;
- Supporting park amenities (such as benches and tables) for almost all parks;
- Tennis court resurfacing or replacement;
- Upgrades to golf support facilities at Stodden Park;
- Maintaining and expanding indoor recreation opportunities in partnership with schools and other groups;
- Multiple dog park sites;



- Increasing wilderness and adventure sport facilities, such as fishing and hang gliding; and
- Integration of historic and cultural resources and interpretation into parks.

## AQUATIC FACILITY NEEDS

Aquatics are a special topic in this planning effort and are separated out from other recreation facilities to focus the discussion on some key elements; primarily, Butte-Silver Bow has limited aquatic and water play opportunities. The publicly-owned pool at Stodden Park was permanently closed in 2006, because the age and condition of the pool had passed the point where repairs were cost-effective. Residents of Butte-Silver Bow voted to contribute the funding used to operate the Stodden Park Pool, staffed under contract by the YMCA, to the new indoor YMCA facility. As part of this agreement, the pool at the YMCA is open to the public with no membership required.

In comparison to similar communities in Montana, Butte-Silver Bow is well-served for basic pool access by the existing providers. The community is fortunate to have a modern, indoor YMCA aquatics facility that provides a variety of aquatics opportunities year-round. Other public and private providers also meet some of the residents' needs for aquatic fun and exercise.

Much like the other facility analyses, aquatics needs were determined based on public involvement findings and trends in other communities. Additionally, this section covers an analysis of the general market area for aquatics facilities.

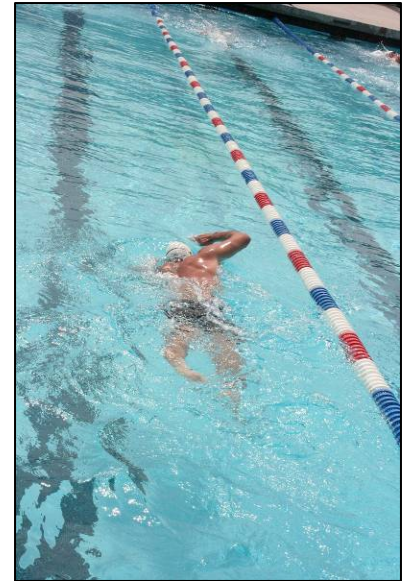
## *PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS/TRENDS*

A variety of aquatics needs have been identified in the public involvement process. The major interests fell into several categories:

- Outdoor aquatic opportunities;
- Adjacent space for socializing and enjoying summer weather;
- Competition pool; and
- Variety of aquatic activities.

While many of these desires can be traced to the activities once enjoyed at the Stodden Park pool, there is also an interest in additional variety of opportunities in addition to the basic swimming pools. Other community input highlighted the limited summer season for outdoor aquatics in Butte-Silver Bow.

A trend in aquatics is the move from swimming in flat, or deep water, to shallow water with spray features, slides, current channels and other moving water. Facilities that include these water features are



called leisure pools. A leisure pool stresses the recreational swimming element and has a majority of its pool area with depths of four feet or less. The shallow water also permits more people in the pool at one time and is more conducive to play and general recreation swimming, rather than lap or competitive swimming. Surveys completed by MIG and partner organizations have shown that leisure pools draw 2-3 times the number of annual swimmers compared to conventional flat water pools.



Communities are also building water parks, large scale water amusement areas with a relatively costly entry fee. These are usually open air and are operated during the summer. In order to attract the number of visitors to make this type of facility viable they are typically located in highly visible locations along high traffic corridors.

Interactive water features are another national trend. These features attract high use, especially from children and families. They can be integrated into a wide variety of park settings, including urban plazas. Once built, interactive water features are relatively inexpensive to operate (compared to a swimming pool) because they typically do not require life guards since there is no standing water. This low operating cost means that facilities can be distributed in the community and unlike pools and water parks, entrance fees are typically not charged for interactive water features.

### *MARKET AREA*

Any type of recreation facility has a natural market area determined by the distance users are willing to travel to use the facility. Large aquatics facilities typically draw from a relatively large geographic area and require a considerable population to provide the number of users necessary to support the portion of operating costs covered by user fees. The relatively small population of the Butte-Silver Bow market area would require a very high participation rate by local swimmers and a large number of visitors from outside the primary market area.



The amount of time that users are willing to travel to a major aquatic facility is typically between 30 minutes and one hour. In Butte-Silver Bow this time translates to about five to 40 miles, with the frequency of use dropping off as distance increases. The distance between major population centers around Butte constrains the market area to approximately the County boundary. Further, with approximately 80 percent of the population of Silver Bow County living in the Butte area, the population of Butte makes up the majority of the potential users.

## LEVEL OF SERVICE COMPARISON

Based on the available facilities and demand in the respective communities, Kalispell and Helena have each established level of service standards for pool facilities. These standards are based on a specified square footage of pool area per 1,000 population. The adopted service levels for each community are listed in Table 5.

**Table 5: Aquatics Standards in Comparable Communities**

CITY	ADOPTED SERVICE STANDARD
Helena	196.6 sq.ft/1,000
Kalispell	85 sq.ft/1,000

The standard for pool space in Helena is based on the population of Lewis and Clark County recognizing that, like Butte, Helena facilities serve the entire area. Applying these standards to Butte-Silver Bow's current population results in a range of approximately 3,000 to 6,800 square feet of needed pool space. This equates to one six-lane 25-yard pool up to slightly more than an eight-lane 25-meter pool. (In comparison, a 50-meter competition pool has 13,455 square feet of pool surface area.)

Although Butte does not operate a pool, the YMCA facility provides 10,000 square feet of publicly accessible pool area which creates a pool level of service of 288 square feet per 1,000 persons. Butte-Silver Bow is adequately served with existing pool facilities, with a pool level of service that exceeds comparable communities. In addition to the YMCA, other providers offer additional publicly accessible pools that can also serve the aquatics needs of the community.

## FACILITY NEEDS

Butte-Silver Bow has adequate facilities to meet the basic aquatic facility needs of the community. Beyond these basic needs, additional facilities that would be highly valued by the community would increase outdoor opportunities and include social gathering spaces in addition to water play. However, aquatic facilities are also among the most resource-intensive facilities included in park systems.

## ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS

The needs identified in this chapter represent a large step forward in the type and quantity of park and recreation amenities available to Butte-Silver Bow residents. As the community needs are prioritized and implemented, the types of parks and recreation facilities owned

and operated by the City-County will require specialized, concentrated efforts to develop, manage and maintain. This will, in turn, require additional resources including both staff and maintenance funding.

An additional need will be to add the necessary expertise and management appropriate to the quality and quantity of services that Butte-Silver Bow will provide. In addition to improving the organizational structure, the community involvement findings expressed a need for a process that allows area residents to propose new projects against a set of objective criteria.

## **COMMUNITY NEEDS SUMMARY**

The community needs analysis used a variety of tools to determine the park and recreation needs of Butte-Silver Bow. The analysis identified a need for 108 acres of new park land with at least some land needed in each park type except for mini parks. In terms of recreation facilities, residents are currently adequately served by sports fields. To accommodate future needs, some fields can be upgraded to allow more play, or altered to provide for additional types of activities.

Butte-Silver Bow also has adequate facilities to meet the basic aquatic facility needs of the community. The existing pool level of service exceeds comparable communities adopted standards, and there are several other pool providers that can also meet public aquatic needs. If additional aquatic facilities are developed, the community should consider the resources needed to maintain and operate such facilities. Trails are popular and the area served by the City-County is large. Therefore, the analysis recommends a higher standard to promote considerable growth in the trail system. Finally, with an increase in the size and scale of the park system, the community should consider a specialized effort to develop, manage and maintain the park and recreation system.



## 4. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Residents' values and aspirations for the future provide the guiding principles for the Comprehensive Park, Trail and Open Space Plan. This chapter focuses on these values and aspirations by establishing a unified vision for the park and recreation system. The vision also builds on the needs identified in the previous chapter, and establishes specific goals and objectives that present the preferred future of the Butte-Silver Bow park and recreation system.

The desired future of the park and recreation system has been condensed into a single statement, or vision, that is provided below. Following the vision statement, a number of goals and objectives have been identified to assist the community in achieving the desired vision of the future.

### VISION

The public outreach efforts that occurred earlier in the planning process provided feedback from a variety of City-County residents regarding their needs and preferences for parks and recreation services. Through these efforts, a vision for the future emerged:

*The Butte-Silver Bow park system is well designed and maintained, with a variety of recreational opportunities provided throughout the year. Parks and open spaces celebrate the area's unique history, Neighborhood residents are able to walk or bike to nearby parks on safe trails and pathways and all residents of the County enjoy convenient access to the open space areas surrounding them.*

This vision describes the park system as it will appear to residents of Silver Bow County in 20 years, at the end of the planning horizon.



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives implement the community wide vision by forming a framework for the Comprehensive Park, Trails and Open Space Plan. A goal is a general statement describing an outcome the City-County wishes to provide. Goals typically do not change over time unless community values or economic conditions make it necessary. Objectives, on the other hand, are more specific, measurable statements that describe a means to achieving a goal. Objectives may change over time, as necessary.

### Goals

Through the planning process, the community identified the following five goals, which will uphold the vision of the Butte-Silver Bow park and recreation system. The Comprehensive Park, Trails and Open Space Plan goals are the primary evaluation tool for park projects. Preliminary park and recreation projects have been identified from these goals and the relative merits of new projects should be judged based on how they meet these goals and move Butte-Silver Bow closer to the envisioned park system.



- Goal 1** *Create a fun, well designed and well maintained park and recreation system.*
- Goal 2** *Provide an efficient system of well-connected parks and open spaces, with access to open space areas throughout Silver Bow County.*
- Goal 3** *Offer a variety of recreational opportunities that allow enjoyment of the park system throughout the year.*
- Goal 4** *Strengthen Butte-Silver Bow's identity as a major recreational, environmental and historical attraction by preserving and enhancing unique historical, open space and cultural elements of the area.*
- Goal 5** *Establish a management structure that can implement the vision of the park, trails and open space plan in collaboration with the community.*



## Objectives

The community will be able to track the progress toward the Comprehensive Park, Trails and Open Space Plan goals by the completion of specific objectives.

**Goal 1** *Create a fun, well designed and maintained park and recreation system.*

- 1.1 Design parks and park facilities to reflect the desires of the surrounding community.
- 1.2 Upgrade and maintain all playgrounds and recreational facilities to current safety and accessibility standards.
- 1.3 Ensure adequate maintenance resources for existing and proposed parks and facilities.
- 1.4 Evaluate all new parks and facilities based on capital and operating costs.



**Goal 2** *Provide an efficient system of well-connected parks and open spaces, with access to the open space areas throughout Silver Bow County.*

- 2.1 Improve park system efficiency by reducing the number of parks in areas that are already well served by the existing system.
- 2.2 Provide local parks within 1/4-mile of Butte neighborhoods.
- 2.3 Create rural community parks in outlying communities.
- 2.4 Create safe connections between neighborhoods, parks and community destinations.
- 2.5 Link communities to surrounding open space areas and increase opportunities for outdoor recreation.





**Goal 3** *Offer a variety of recreational opportunities that allow enjoyment of the park system throughout the year.*

- 3.1 Provide innovative park facilities while maintaining existing park resources.
- 3.2 Increase opportunities for new and existing types of indoor and outdoor recreation activities.
- 3.3 Continue partnerships with other organizations to ensure that the needs of the community are met in the most efficient way possible.

**Goal 4** *Strengthen Butte-Silver Bow's identity as a major recreational, environmental and historical attraction by preserving and enhancing unique historical, open space and cultural elements of the area.*

- 4.1 Extend the theme of Butte-Silver Bow's unique identity to play areas, park facilities and amenities to create vibrant parks and programs.
- 4.2 Unify historic mine sites into an organized network, connected by trails and coordinated interpretation.
- 4.3 Create partnerships with cultural and historical organizations to strengthen Butte-Silver Bow's identity.



**Goal 5** *Establish a management structure that can implement the vision of the park, trails and open space plan in collaboration with the community.*

- 5.1 Reorganize park system management and create a Park and Recreation Department.
- 5.2 Enable residents to propose projects through a community driven decision making process.
- 5.3 Develop a clear and objective set of criteria that will be used to evaluate proposed projects.
- 5.4 Encourage public involvement in design of new parks and development of recreation programs.

- 5.5 Create internal systems to track and attribute maintenance time and other resources to the proper funding source and purpose.

Achieving these objectives may require capital projects, staff time or reallocation of resources to bring greater focus to the City-County's park and recreation efforts. The recommended projects that will meet the goals and objectives are detailed in the following chapter.



## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter promotes the vision for parks and recreation services in Butte-Silver Bow by providing recommended actions to address the community needs for parks, facilities and programming. This chapter is organized into the following three categories:

- Park land, open space areas and heritage sites;
- Recreation facilities, including sports and aquatic facilities and trails; and
- Park system operation and management recommendations.

In addition to the discussion of each of these categories, a project list is included in Appendix B that details more specific recommended projects and the goals that these projects help meet. The prioritization of these projects is a task that will begin with this plan and continue to occur between the community, the Park Board, City-County staff and the Council of Commissioners.

### PARK LAND, OPEN SPACE AREAS, AND HERITAGE SITES

Butte-Silver Bow is fortunate to have a relatively large amount of park land, sport facilities, open space areas and many unique historic and cultural sites. While some residents have an abundance of parks in close proximity, other neighborhoods and communities are in need of additional park land. Fortunately, Butte-Silver Bow is surrounded by an abundance of undeveloped land with potential to meet the park and recreation needs of area residents.

The community needs assessment identified a future need for 108 acres of new park land. Some of this park land is already in City-County ownership and simply needs to be developed as a park. Other undeveloped park land is dedicated land from the Superfund settlement or other mine lands that will likely become part of the park system (mostly in open space area use).

Future park development in Silver Bow County should also include communities outside of Butte. As the more remote communities grow in population, some basic park services should be provided closer to these homes. The need for community park land assumes two new rural community parks will be necessary during the planning period.

#### *LOCAL PARK RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Upgrade existing parks to meet current safety and accessibility standards.** A key finding from the community needs assessment concerns the condition of existing parks. Some existing parks have potential safety hazards, while others have barriers to accessibility.



Residents placed particular importance on improving older sport fields and playgrounds to meet current safety standards.

**Identify sites that are undeveloped and unneeded or have overlapping service, then remove from the park inventory.**

Geographic analysis of the Butte-Silver Bow park system shows that the Uptown area is extensively covered by mini and neighborhood parks with many service areas significantly overlapping. Consolidating the system inventory can reduce park maintenance costs and make park and recreation resources more efficient.



Three sites stand out due to their overlapping service areas and should be considered for removal:

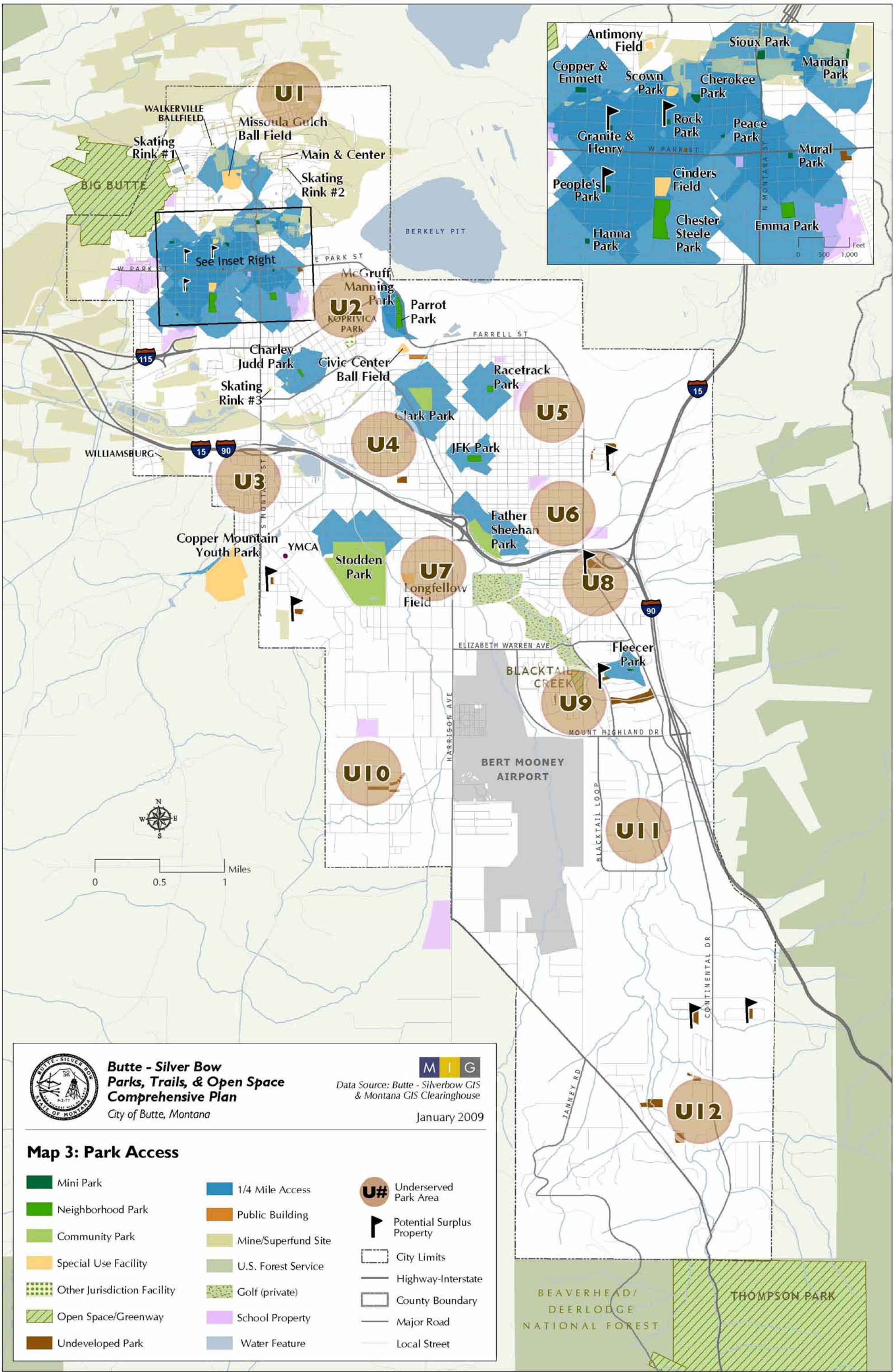
- Granite & Henry
- People's Park
- Rock Park

On Map 3: Park Access (following page) each park is assigned a 1/4-mile park access area, and overlapping access areas become a darker shade. The three parks identified overlap almost completely with other surrounding parks, meaning that even without these sites the entire area would be very well served for park access. These parks are minimally developed and provide relatively little recreation value to the community. Each of these parks should be the subject of a neighborhood meeting to discuss options, including local contribution to maintain the site, leaving the site under/undeveloped with minimal maintenance, or disposing of the site. This is not a complete list of the possibilities—in each case it should be made clear that resources that had been going to minimal maintenance of these sites would be redirected to improve the park system in the local area.



Most of the existing undeveloped park sites are unsuitable for park uses or are in less-than-ideal locations. These existing undeveloped sites should be removed from the park inventory unless they meet site selection guidelines for neighborhood parks and are in underserved areas (indicated on Map 3). Both of these potentially surplus park sites and undeveloped sites that are least likely to provide valuable park service are noted with small flags on Map 3. If there is another public use for these lands, or if the property is sold, the resources raised should be transferred to park and recreation funding to reinvest in developing existing sites. Any new funding from the sale of surplus property should be spent to improve parks that are geographically near the surplus site to improve service in that area.











**Add new local parks to the system, focusing on underserved areas.**

Provide a park within walking distance ( $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile) of urban residents. The community needs assessment indicated a need for neighborhood parks in close proximity to residents. The distance people are willing to travel to get to a park or trail can be determined by studying user preferences and abilities. The  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile access area, indicated in blue on Map 3 around each park, provides a visualization of the areas within a typical walking distance of a local neighborhood or community park. Nearly all of Butte south of Stodden Park is unserved at either the  $\frac{1}{4}$  or 1-mile service range. Additionally, many areas between existing parks are also underserved. The assessment of community needs identified 12 areas that are most critically underserved in Butte. These park areas are indicated on Map 3. Several of these areas could be addressed by developing existing park land or adding neighborhood-serving amenities such as play areas picnic tables and benches to other existing parks. One of the 12 identified areas—indicated as “U6” on the access analysis map—has a unique opportunity for a larger site due to its location at the edge of a developed area but still central to the community as a whole. This site should be developed as a community park.

**Create rural community parks in two outlying communities.**

The City-County should plan on two additional community parks to serve growing communities outside of Butte. These parks should be considered at the request of the local community and ongoing maintenance of facilities should be a local responsibility. The remote locations of the communities in Silver Bow County call for a unique type of rural community park. These parks may be smaller, or larger, than a typical urban community park and should include a range of recreation opportunities, as they may be the only developed park for several miles. The small park project in Rocker, adjacent to the school provides a good model of the most basic rural community park. When other communities, such as Ramsay or Divide, reach a similar size as Rocker, the City-County should consider the assistance it can provide in planning and developing park amenities.

**OPEN SPACE AREA RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Add remediated lands with open space area uses to the park system.** Remediated Superfund lands in Butte-Silver Bow should be incorporated into the park system as public open space. These sites offer unique opportunities to interpret open space, industrial and cultural history, a story that can best be told as part of one system. The conditions of the Superfund settlement will require special tracking of the resources used to maintain these lands; however it will also provide funding for upkeep.





**Enhance access to large open space resources.** According to comments from the public, the ability to walk out of Butte and into open space areas is an important part of why many residents live in this area. Publicly-owned open space areas, including Butte-Silver Bow land, the national forests and other public lands, are key to the many activities enjoyed by residents. Butte-Silver Bow should create gateways or backcountry connections to these open space areas that include trailheads, signage and other public information about how best to use and preserve the community's backcountry.

**Add other sites on an opportunity basis to protect important resources.** As opportunities and resources allow, sensitive lands and properties identified by the community as important resources should be acquired and protected as part of the park and open space inventory.

### *HERITAGE SITE RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Create a network of open spaces, historical sites and other recreation facilities connected by trails in the mine lands.** The park system has the potential to play a major role in interpreting the rich history of Butte-Silver Bow. As mine lands continue to evolve as park land, an interconnected preserve of open spaces, historical sites and other recreation facilities can enhance Butte-Silver Bow's notoriety as a major historical and recreational attraction.



**Continue to build on Butte-Silver Bow's historic identity using the park system.** Interpretive elements, such as signs, markers and art, located at important locations in the community, can help recount and interpret Butte-Silver Bow's past. In addition to the mine sites themselves, remediated sites can exhibit the impact of mining activities on water quality, deforestation, and wildlife. The form of this interpretation should be varied and include information and methods of communication that are relevant to a wide variety of age groups and backgrounds.

**Partner with community, historic, and cultural institutions to provide programming, pursue funding and coordinate efforts.** Butte-Silver Bow parks and recreation should be positioned by the City-County as the local government partner to community groups operating facilities, programming and doing fundraising for historic and cultural efforts.

### **RECREATION FACILITIES**

In addition to parks and open spaces, facilities that support play, learning and exercise are a critical part of the overall park system. Improvements to recreation facilities should include upgrading fields to allow more play or changing the type of fields provided. New

fields and facilities may also be needed for some sports to replace existing single fields or underdeveloped park sites. The City-County should also consider development of a water play area with opportunities for social gathering, and trails that offer access within communities and throughout the surrounding open space areas.

### *COMPETITIVE SPORT FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Maintain and upgrade existing sports facilities.** The assessment of community needs for sport facilities indicates that currently Butte-Silver Bow has the correct number of sports fields, courts, and other competitive facilities for the use of schools and community groups. However, there is a need to update these amenities in nearly all parks. Older baseball and softball fields are in need of safety improvements and several of the existing tennis courts will need resurfacing or replacement. In addition, the largest grouping of developed soccer fields has a limited season due to a lack of proper irrigation. Improving these fields is likely to be considerably less costly than developing additional fields to meet future community needs. The City-County should enter into a partnership with the school district to identify funding for the needed improvements.



**Increase indoor court availability.** The City-County should coordinate with operators of indoor court space, particularly the School District, to increase community access to existing indoor court space. In addition, the City-County should consider developing an indoor court facility for tennis in the park system. A first phase project should include at least two indoor courts with identified space for expansion to four or six courts. Any additional indoor facility should be combined with other uses, if possible, to minimize the staffing requirements during operating hours.

**Introduce new types of facilities as needed by the community.** The City-County should add new types of park facilities to existing and new park sites to increase and maintain variety in the system. New facilities could include new playgrounds, dog parks, and wilderness and adventure sport facilities for activities such as fishing and hang gliding.



### *AQUATIC FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Do not build a large-scale water park or traditional pool facility.** Continue using existing aquatic facilities, as an alternative to developing a large scale outdoor aquatics complex. Although there is desire for additional aquatic opportunities, Butte-Silver Bow is already well-served for basic pool access by existing providers. The remaining unmet need for outdoor aquatic play and summer social gathering spaces can be met in other ways. In addition, other public

and private providers will continue meet some of the residents' needs for aquatic fun and exercise.

Additional factors that make a new large-scale water park or traditional pool facility impractical include climate and funding. With a brief season of warm weather, a new water park or pool facility faces a limited operating year and would likely be reliant on fickle visitor dollars for the majority of its income. In addition to the initial cost of development, ongoing operating costs will also be necessary to run and maintain a new facility.

**Continue partnering with YMCA for indoor aquatics access.**

The community has a popular, indoor YMCA aquatics facility that provides a variety of aquatics opportunities year-round. The City-County should renew its agreement to provide limited operation support to the YMCA facility in exchange for expanded public access. The City-County should also explore opportunities to jointly develop adjacent outdoor spray features to enhance this existing asset and partnership.



**Add water playgrounds or interactive fountains at appropriate locations.** Community input indicated that there is a need to have outdoor facilities that focus on play and provide social space to enjoy the relatively brief summer season. Opportunities for water play can include water playgrounds or interactive fountains and water features. Once built, interactive water features are relatively inexpensive to operate (compared to a swimming pool) because they typically do not require life guards since there is no standing water. Smaller scale facilities also present an opportunity to increase access by creating several smaller sites with no gate fee.

**If the community ultimately decides to develop a large-scale water park or traditional pool facility, the City-County should strongly consider the following:**

- **Scale of facility.** Because a large scale water park or pool will serve the entire community and be popular throughout the region, the facility should be planned as a community or regional park and be designed to accommodate greater traffic volumes, parking, and other similar considerations.
- **Type of facility.** Trends indicate that shallow water facilities with spray features, slides, current channels and other moving water are more popular than traditional, flat water pools. Facilities that include these water features are called leisure pools. A leisure pool stresses the recreational swimming element and has a majority of its pool area with depths of four feet or less. The shallow water also permits



more people in the pool at one time and is more conducive to play and general recreation swimming, rather than lap or competitive swimming. Surveys completed by MIG and partner organizations have shown that these types of facilities draw 2-3 times the number of annual swimmers compared to conventional flat water pools.

- **Development costs.** Initial development costs, including planning, design, building and materials can quickly reach millions of dollars. The City-County should be prepared to spend the high cost of developing a large-scale water park facility.
- **Operating costs.** In addition to development costs, costs associated with operating a facility can reach tens of thousands of dollars per year for water, equipment, heat and support staff to provide safety and management of the facility. The design of such a facility should include development of a detailed operating plan.
- **Management.** The City-County currently does not have the management capacity in the parks and recreation organization to properly develop, operate, or maintain facilities of this type. Public confidence in the ability to operate a facility will play a role in the willingness of the voters to fund a major facility.

### *OTHER RECREATION FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Offer a variety of recreation opportunities.** The community identified a need for a variety of recreational activities, in addition to organized sports facilities. Other popular facilities include ice skating rinks, dog parks, outdoor adventure facilities, and aquatic facilities. The City-County should use the Park Board as the venue for exploring new additions to the park system to meet this need for variety and other goals.

**Enhance year-round recreation opportunities.** There is a general need for indoor recreation facilities in Butte-Silver Bow due to the long and cold winters. The existing indoor facilities are highly valued and new additions such as the YMCA aquatics and fitness center are well used. The park system should also include facilities to support outdoor winter activities such as cross-country skiing, ice skating and snowmobiling. Programming can also help the community make the most of the existing facilities, introducing activities such as snowshoeing to people who otherwise only hike in the summer.

**Evaluate value of neighborhood ice rinks.** The primary outdoor winter facility provided in the Butte-Silver Bow park system is the neighborhood ice rink. However, community input suggests that the informal ice surfaces are underutilized and present an eye-sore during



summer months. The Park Board should initiate a discussion with the community regarding the value of these facilities. As a test, the City-County could pull back its efforts to focus on one higher quality rink at Clark Park. Following one year, the Park Board should revisit the decision and see if additional ice rinks are necessary and where they would best serve the community.



### *TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Enhance the local trail network in Butte.** The trail network in Butte has two important roles in the park and recreation system. This is to provide opportunities for recreational and fitness activities and to provide safe alternative transportation routes for park users to access parks from their homes and community destinations. The local trail network in Butte should include trails that provide looping recreational routes and direct connections to important community destinations such as parks, schools, shopping centers and backcountry connections. Map 4: Proposed Trails and Backcountry Connections, on the following page, illustrates proposed trail routes that complete partial loops and provide new routes to and from parks, schools and neighborhoods.

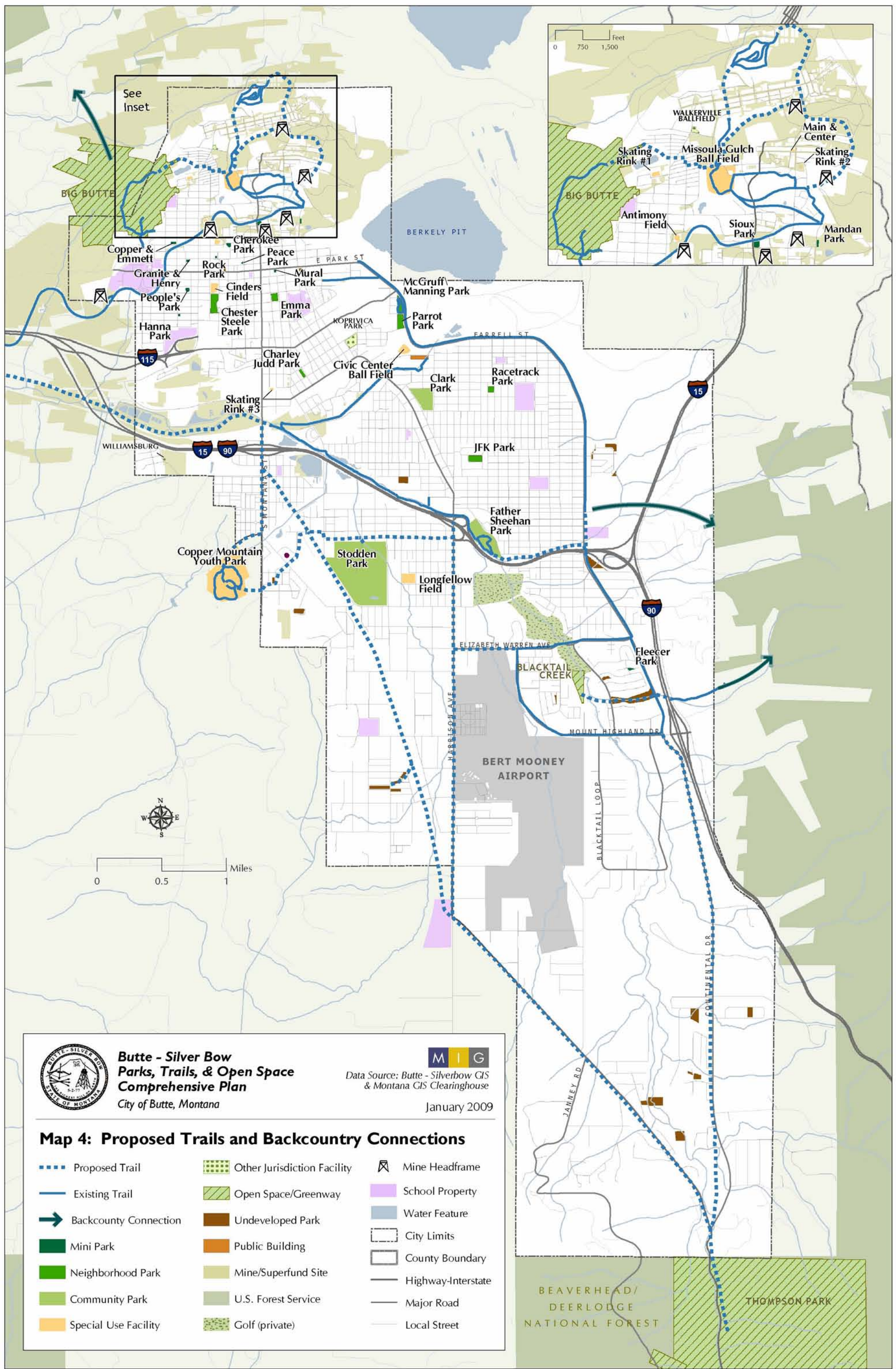
### **Promote access to nearby wilderness and open space areas.**

Demand for trails and trail related activities are high. Based on community input, geographic analysis and desired connections, spur trails that connect to existing and future resources in nearby public lands should be provided, including trails in remote communities. Trail routes that can connect with existing or planned networks in other publicly held lands should take priority. These backcountry connections can multiply the value of a relatively short segment of trail. Map 4: Proposed Trails and Backcountry Connections illustrates a number of potential back country connections from Butte and Map 5, expands this view to include other communities in the County.



**Develop regional trail linkages.** The City-County should also consider trails that connect surrounding communities and create the potential for larger regional linkages beyond the county boundaries. Using the key corridors that have historically been the links between communities (including rail, river and freeway corridor) the City-County should plan for and develop two major regional trail routes. The east-west connections should include completion of the Silver Bow Creek Greenway to link with Thompson Park. The major north-south route is proposed to roughly follow I-15 from Nissler to Melrose. These trails should connect as many communities as possible and link up with the backcountry connections identified on Map 5.





**Butte - Silver Bow  
Parks, Trails, & Open Space  
Comprehensive Plan**  
City of Butte, Montana



Data Source: Butte - Silverbow GIS  
& Montana GIS Clearinghouse

January 2009

**Map 4: Proposed Trails and Backcountry Connections**

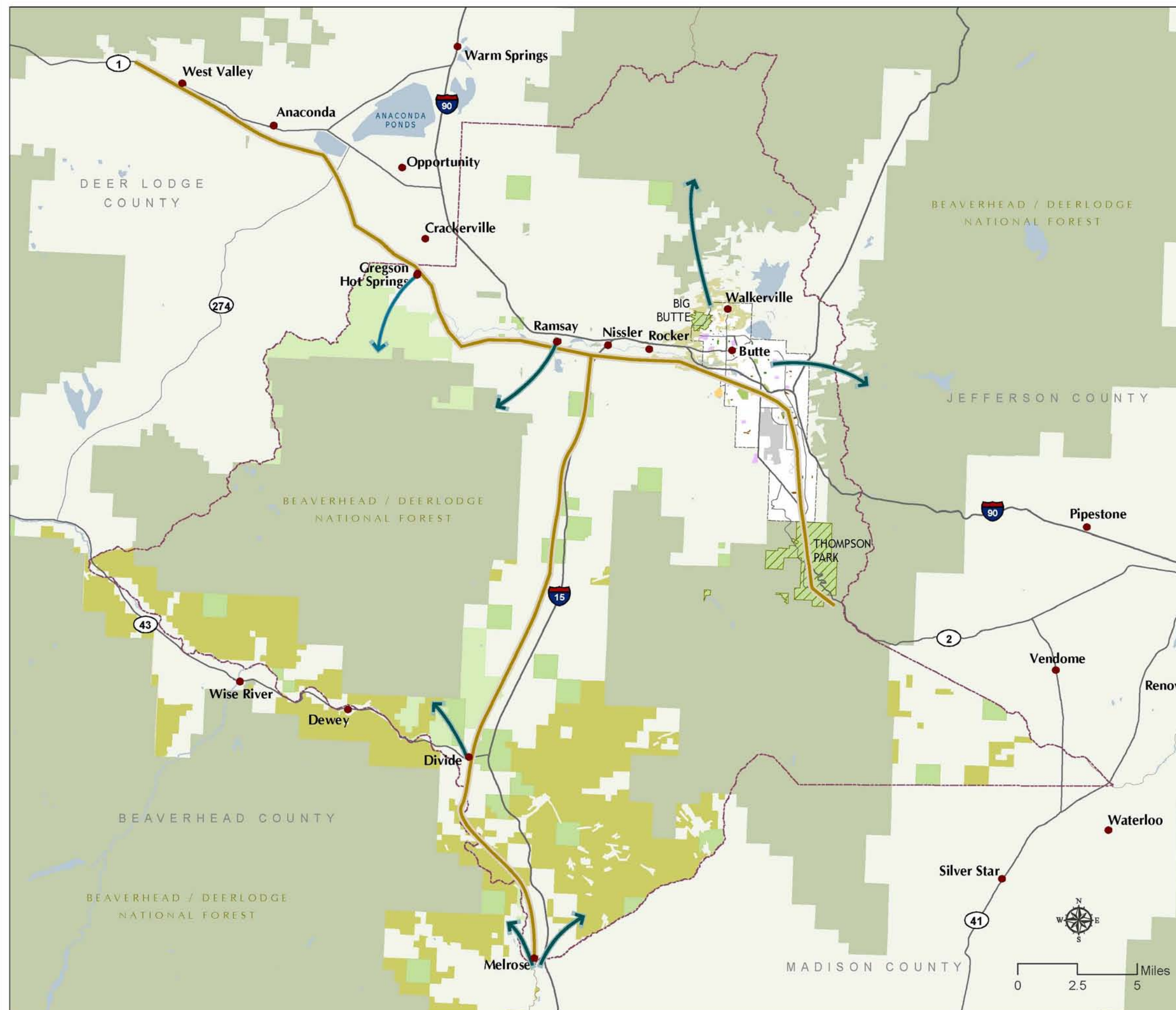
- |                        |                             |                    |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Proposed Trail         | Other Jurisdiction Facility | Mine Headframe     |
| Existing Trail         | Open Space/Greenway         | School Property    |
| Backcountry Connection | Undeveloped Park            | Water Feature      |
| Mini Park              | Public Building             | City Limits        |
| Neighborhood Park      | Mine/Superfund Site         | County Boundary    |
| Community Park         | U.S. Forest Service         | Highway-Interstate |
| Special Use Facility   | Golf (private)              | Major Road         |
|                        |                             | Local Street       |







**Butte - Silver Bow  
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City of Butte, Montana



- Proposed Regional Trail Connection
- Backcountry Connection
- United States Forest Service
- Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- Montana State Trust Lands
- Bureau of Land Management
- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Special Use Facility
- Other Jurisdiction Facility
- Open Space/Greenway
- Undeveloped Park
- Public Building
- Mine/Superfund Site
- School Property
- Water Feature
- City Limits
- Butte County Boundary
- Other County Boundary
- Highway-Interstate
- Major Road
- Local Street

**Map 5: Silver Bow  
County Trail Access and  
Backcountry Connections**



January 2009 Data Source: Butte - Silverbow  
GIS & Montana GIS Clearinghouse



## OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

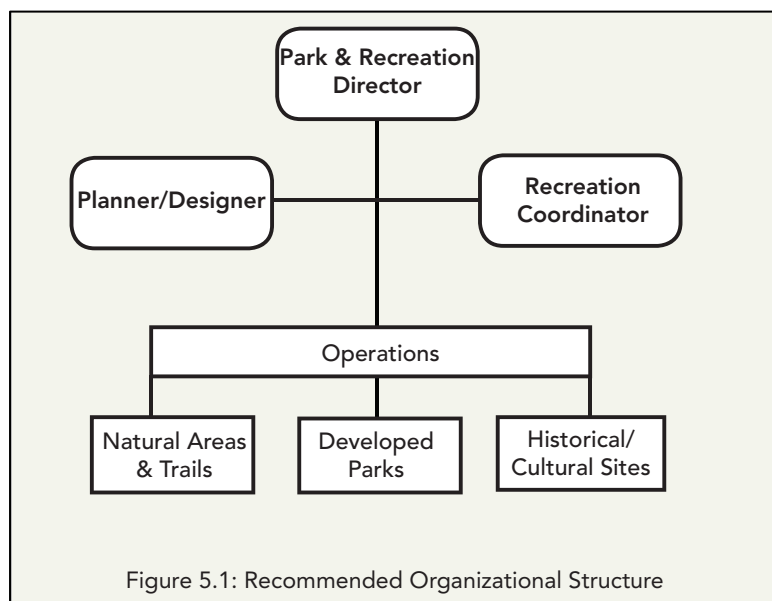
Currently, the City-County uses staff from at least three divisions or departments to maintain, plan, and program park and recreation activities. Under the Public Works Department, park staff focuses on maintaining developed parks in the system; particularly ball fields and play areas. Park maintenance staff is also responsible for facilities outside the park system including snow removal for downtown parking lots. Some park facilities and activities are also the responsibility of other departments. These responsibilities include managing open space areas, maintaining trails, and maintaining a variety of publicly operated historic and cultural features.

As the identified community needs are prioritized and implemented, the types of parks and recreation facilities owned and operated by the City-County will require specialized, concentrated efforts to develop, manage, and maintain. This evolution of the park and recreation system will require additional capital dollars and maintenance resources – both staff and funding. Butte-Silver Bow will also have to add the necessary expertise and management appropriate to the quality and quantity of services that Butte-Silver Bow will provide.

### *DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS*

#### **Transition into a Park and Recreation Department.**

Establishment of a management structure can help implement the vision of the park, trails, and open space plan in collaboration with the community. The department would be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the park and recreation system, including open space areas and trails, developed parks, historical and cultural sites, and recreation programs. A proposed organizational chart is provided below.



**Add a director with a full range of park and recreation**

**experience.** A director is essential for managing the transition to and ongoing operations of a Park and Recreation Department. The Park and Recreation Director will supervise the department, ensure compliance with the Plan, oversee park development, maintenance operations, and increase internal/external relationships. This can be accomplished through reorganization of other departments/divisions that provide park and recreation services.

*PROJECT EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Establish a clear decision making process for new projects.** An understandable and consistent process can allow area residents to propose new projects against a set of objective criteria. Such a process will allow all proposals to have the same opportunity for review. The process will be guided by the Park and Recreation Department and park board, resulting in an informed recommendation to the City-County Council of Commissioners.

**Develop an annual action plan.** Each year, an annual action plan and work program should be developed for parks and recreation that identifies key plan implementation items for the coming year. The Parks Board and staff should participate in setting the priorities and specific work tasks for the coming year. At the end of the year, an evaluation should be made to measure performance.

**Establish a policy regarding memorials and park naming.** This policy should address the location and type of memorial features that can be placed in parks, to help distribute them more evenly in the system. Also important is the process for naming a new or existing park. Names that contribute to telling the story of Butte-Silver Bow should be encouraged.

*MAINTENANCE AND PROGRAMMING  
RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Develop a system to track staff and equipment expenditures applicable to park maintenance.** As the Park and Recreation Department becomes an independent entity, a system to track the expenditures (primarily staff time and equipment use) on park maintenance, open space area maintenance, and other areas of responsibility will be important to sharing equipment and staff. Tracking maintenance costs will also allow the City-County to analyze spending and identify inefficiencies in the park system and ensure that funding committed to specific purposes can be reported accurately.



**Establish a per-acre allocation for park maintenance.** For each park type, identify the critical tasks and the associated cost of maintenance. For each new park site added to the system ensure that additional resources are included in the park and recreation budget to adequately maintain the new park site. The per acre cost of maintenance for parks in Butte-Silver Bow will depend on the specific tasks required and will vary by park type and facilities included. Generally open space maintenance will be 10-20% of the cost of maintaining a basic developed park. Also special facilities in parks, such as sport fields, courts and especially indoor facilities will increase the maintenance requirements of a particular park. A more accurate picture of these costs could be developed through a maintenance management plan.

**Focus department efforts on park and recreation activities.** In order to build public support for the expansion of park and recreation funding, all activities not directly park and recreation related should be clearly defined and removed from the department's responsibilities. If particular tasks continue to make sense for off-season park staff the cost tracking system should clearly identify the work and the department should be reimbursed from the appropriate source of funding. Street work, particularly snow removal from downtown parking lots, is a good example of work that should not take away from the City-County's funding for park and recreation.

**Consider expanding recreation programming.** Once the management system has been restructured and project evaluation criteria have been established, the City-County should consider offering recreation programming beyond the current level of organizing tournaments. Activities that range from environmental education, to health and wellness programs, to organized sports teams can provide fun and entertainment for all ages, throughout the year.



## 6. Implementation

The recommendations and project list presented in this plan include many of the projects necessary to make the vision for Butte-Silver Bow's park system a reality. However, this is a long-term plan and the City-County alone does not have the capacity to meet all the needs of the community nor implement all of the recommended projects in the near term. For these reasons, it is important to identify the highest priority actions, guiding the first steps that the community should take to maximize the success of the plan. This chapter considers the current political and financial realities and lays out a course of action to implement the recommendations and assist in community decision-making over the long-term. The three implementation strategies in this chapter include:

- Action Item 1: Capacity Building;
- Action Item 2: Identifying Priority Projects; and
- Action Item 3: Project Funding.

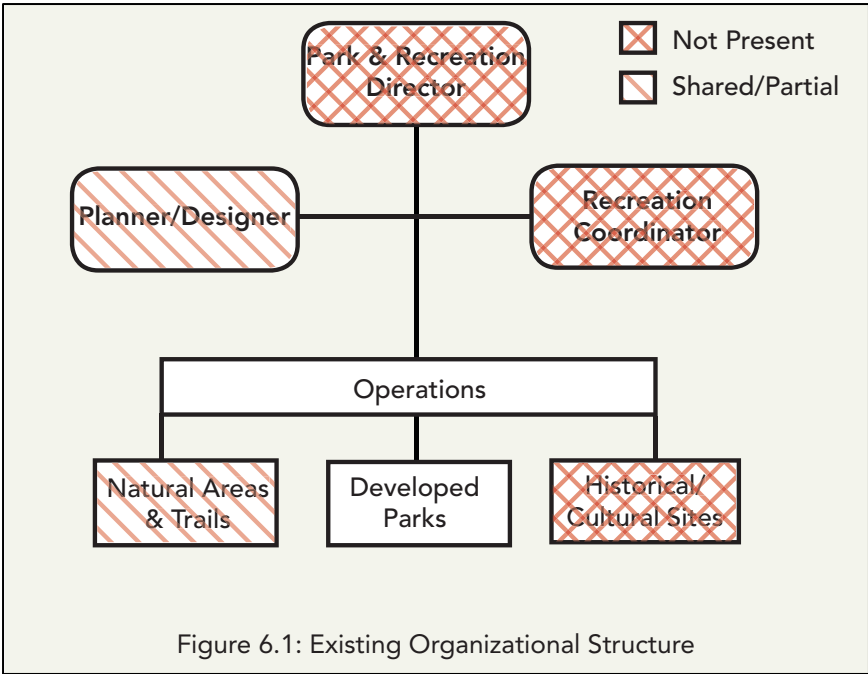
### ACTION ITEM 1: CAPACITY BUILDING

The types of parks and recreation facilities owned and operated by the City-County will require specialized, concentrated efforts to develop, manage and maintain. This will, in turn, require additional resources including both staff and maintenance funding. The first step to creating a high quality park system with long-term sustainability is to increase the organizational focus of the City-County on parks and recreation. The recommendation to form a Park and Recreation Department can be implemented in phases to allow for consolidation of existing functions from other departments and gradual increases in staff resources as other projects are implemented. The existing situation and the phased implementation of this structure are described below.

#### *EXISTING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE*

Using the recommended structure as a reference point, the existing Park Department maintains developed parks with a focus on sports fields. Senior management of the department is handled by the public works director, and other supporting roles are filled by staff in other departments such as Planning. The publicly owned former mine sites, including many open space areas and trails, are managed and maintained by the staff funded under the superfund settlement. Other roles are partially filled by active volunteers in the community, particularly promoting new projects.

In addition to maintaining park sites, the parks staff also currently assists in snow removal, street closures for festivals, and repair of public facilities. The current structure fulfills portions of the



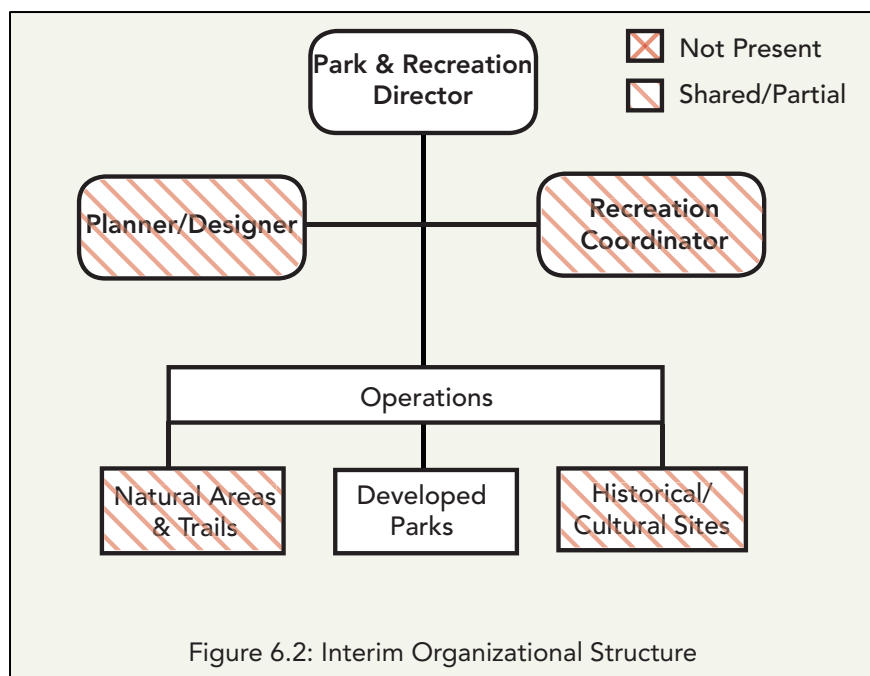
recommended structure indicated in the illustration above.

The diagram also indicates some planning and design capacity (largely borrowed from other departments) and partial coverage of open space areas and trails. Under this structure the implementation of this master plan will require extensive collaboration between departments with multiple sets of priorities and duplicate supervision.

### *INTERIM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE*

The City-County can focus park and recreation activities by beginning to draw together the functions currently housed in other departments that will eventually become positions in the Park and Recreation Department. This would include developing the open space area and trails and the cultural resources maintenance groups.

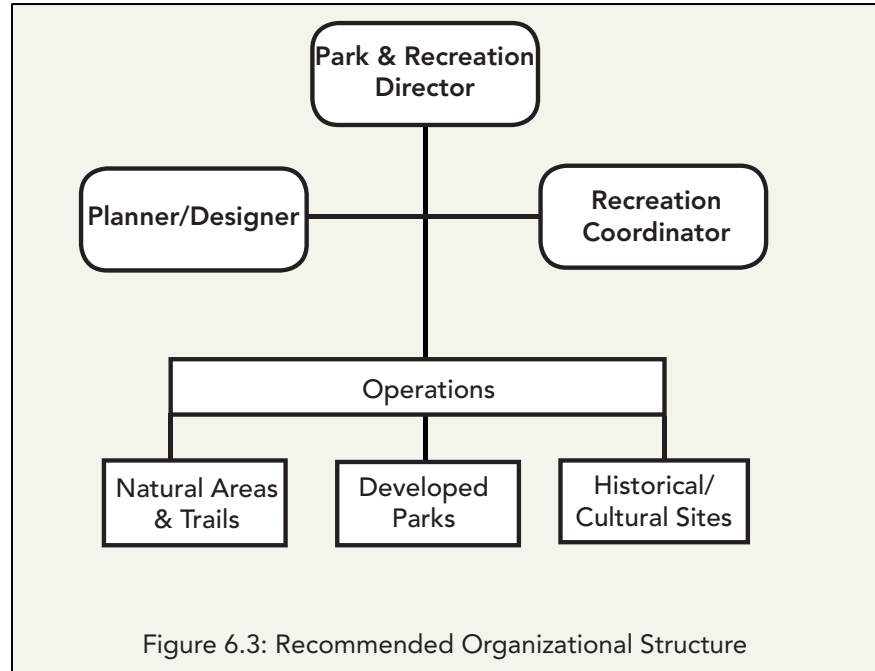
An important step in the development of the new organization will be the hiring of one new position, Director of Parks and Recreation, and the separation of parks and recreation from public works. The director will provide strategic guidance for the new department and represent park and recreation interests in the community and in the senior management of the City-County. This position may be developed through reorganization of current staff responsibilities from all departments that provide park and recreation services.



The Park and Recreation Director would be able to guide existing efforts and develop the additional roles needed to fill out the structure, particularly while the employees are still located in other departments. At this stage, the new department will also eventually be able to establish new roles including recreation coordinator and responsibilities such as the management and maintenance of publicly owned historic and cultural sites. The recreation coordinator role should initially include developing relationships with existing recreation providers (YMCA, sports groups and the school district) and assist local sports groups in organizing tournaments. Historic and cultural site operations should start with responsibility for the maintenance and programming of sites such as the Original Mine amphitheater, and grow to include other historic facilities, especially mine sites. Developed parks operations will continue much as it has, providing mowing, snow removal, trash collection and other maintenance services to park sites.

### RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The final key steps toward the ideal structure include filling out the operations responsibilities and adding a recreation coordinator position as well as a planner/designer position. The complete recommended organizational structure is diagrammed below.



The long-term goal of the restructure includes two additional positions to completely fill the roles of planner/designer and recreation coordinator. The recreation coordinator position will expand on the recreation opportunities available to Butte-Silver Bow residents and support partnerships with community organizations. This position will also take on the responsibility of scheduling and reserving facilities in parks, such as picnic areas and sport fields. The City-County may also begin to consider adding recreation programming of its own to fill niche programming needs. The planner/designer will be necessary to manage new park development projects that will result from the increased community attention to and support of the park system resulting from this plan. This position should be filled with a landscape architect able to complete the smaller design tasks needed to update existing parks and add small features to new sites. The planner/designer will also assist in managing any contracted assistance in developing the park system. Operations in all three key areas will be brought under the Park and Recreation Department, along with the resources necessary to maintain these facilities.



## **ACTION ITEM 2: IDENTIFYING PRIORITY PROJECTS**

Enhancing the organizational capacity of the City-County in parks and recreation will create the opportunity to complete a wide variety of projects. It is critical that this new department establish a reputation for responding to community needs identified in the master plan and on an ongoing basis through the park board. A critical aspect of gaining this reputation is establishing a clear process for new projects to follow from idea to implementation and beyond. In addition to identifying the key projects, staff and the park board should regularly set, implement and review a work plan to ensure that a manageable number of projects are taken on in any given year.

### *COMMUNITY DECISION MAKING PROCESS*

The active citizens of Butte-Silver Bow have had no difficulty in coming up with ideas to improve the park system. The wide variety of ideas and passion with which they are pursued demonstrates this community's commitment to parks and recreation. This plan recommends the establishment of a decision making process that will help the citizens of the county understand the full process of project implementation, from idea to ongoing maintenance. The recommended process is diagramed on the next page and explained below.

Projects are typically initiated by a project champion or the person or organization with the idea or will to move it forward. This champion would be responsible for explaining to the park board and park and recreation staff what the concept is and any preliminary ideas about how it should happen. This concept would be summarized on a standardized project checklist that would help everyone involved understand the idea. The park board and staff would review this concept and analyze it using the goals and objectives of the park trails and open space master plan. In addition to the goals of this plan, other criteria that could be used to help evaluate projects include:

- Total costs: both construction and operation
- Project partnership, particularly partners that could operate any new facilities
- Number of users who would benefit from the project
- Ability to use project to leverage other funding
- Life span/durability of feature

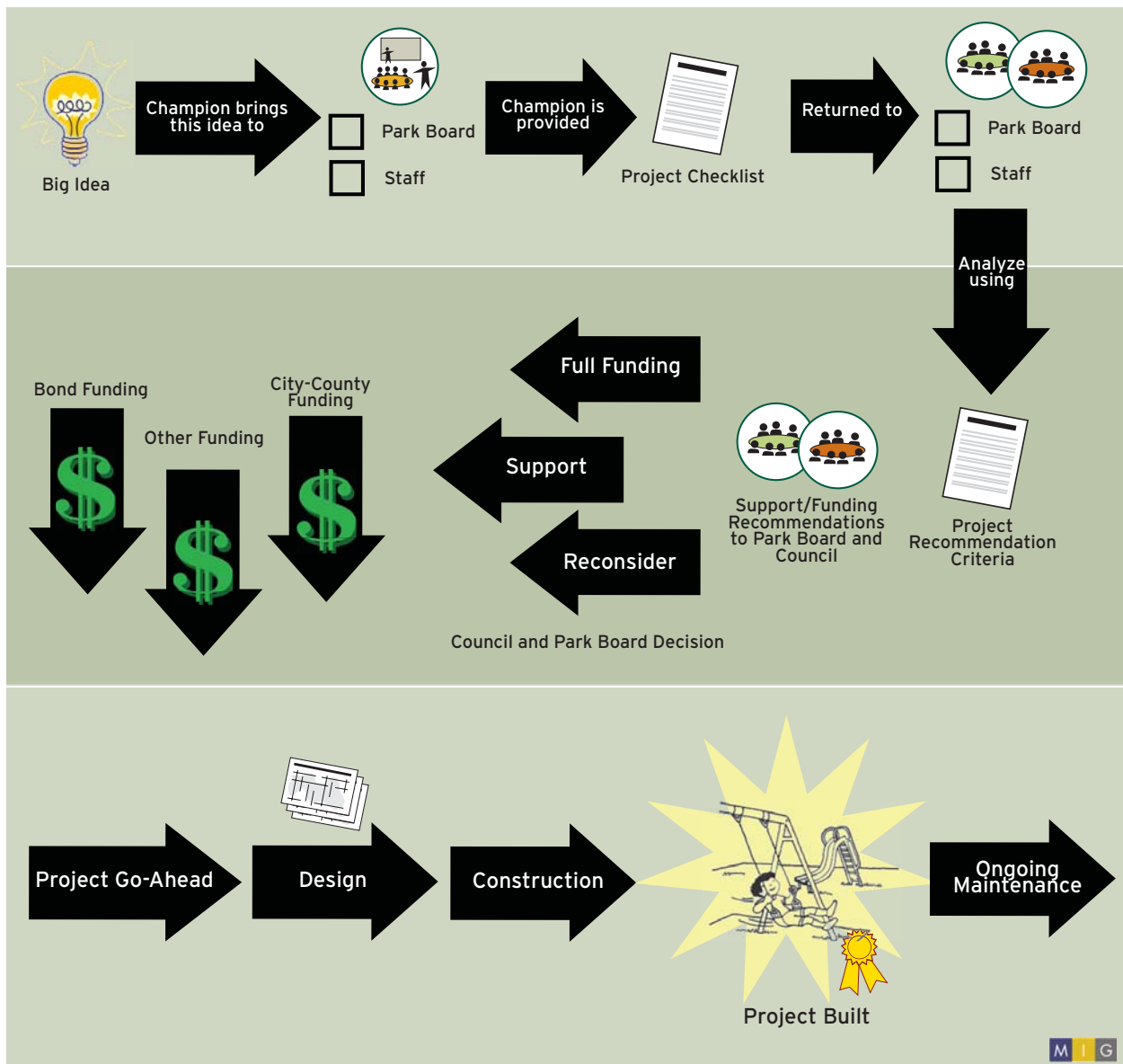


Figure 6.4: Community Decision Making Process

A variety of recommendations could be made by the Park Board to the Council about any given project. Several possibilities include:

- Full Support/Funding: City-County should do what is necessary to help make this project happen,
- Support: This project would be a good addition to the park system but public resources should not be committed to the construction or maintenance of this project, or
- Reconsider: This project does not fit with the goals and objectives of the park system, this project could move forward privately or be redesigned and resubmitted.

The recommendation of the park board will be forwarded on to the Council of Commissioners who ultimately decides most funding options.

Once the decisions are made and funding is available, a typical project will go through design and construction phases (which can take a significant amount of time depending on the project size) before the opening of a new facility or initiation of a new program. A critical note is that the story does not end with the ribbon cutting as any project will then require ongoing maintenance to ensure that the initial investment is not wasted.

### *ANNUAL PARK AND RECREATION WORK PLAN*

The annual work plan for the park board and park and recreation staff should be limited to a number of projects that the existing staff and volunteer resources can achieve. Tasks on this plan could include internal reorganizational, progress toward approving or implementing capital projects, pursuing new partnerships or any other task that arise in implementing the vision for parks and recreation.

The first year work plan will be especially important as it will begin to build the case for the reorganization of the department and the proof that the City-County is committed to achieving the goals of the community. The first package of projects will need to be focused, due to limited staff resources and the need for quick successes and longer term vision and capacity building. A model work plan with four key proposed projects is included separately along side this plan for the consideration of the park board and the Council of Commissioners.

In future years the work plan could draw from the projects identified during the master planning process (included in Appendix B) as well as new ideas that have surfaced since the completion of the plan. The sample 2009 work plan can be used as a model for future years.

### **ACTION ITEM 3: PROJECT FUNDING**

Identification of funding is often the largest obstacle to implementing park projects. It is of particular importance to the projects developed under this plan to not only fund the construction or initiation of a project, but to identify the ongoing resources that will sustain the project through its lifetime.

### *FUNDING PRIORITY PROJECTS*

The projects selected for the first year work plan will most likely need to be funded on a pay-as-you-go basis. This will include expansion of existing sources of funding as well as any quick turn-around grant sources that can be identified for specific projects. While grant

funding is a real possibility, it is important to note that grants typically require a significant amount of matching funds that will need to come from general funds or potentially donations.

### *ADDITIONAL PARK FUNDING SOURCES*

There are a wide variety of funding sources that will be applicable to projects in Butte-Silver Bow. The list below is provided as a reference for identifying the relevant sources of funds for building and maintaining park and recreation resources.

**General Fund:** This is the City-County's primary source for operating revenue and comes primarily from taxes. Since park and recreation services must compete with other City-County operations for these funds, this source can change from year to year.

**Park Maintenance District:** Montana law allows for the passage of a Park Maintenance District by the Council of Commissioners without voter approval. Such a district could be used to levee funds for additional maintenance. Due to the concentration of park sites in Butte, any park maintenance district should be limited to the City limits, and could be created to serve an even smaller area to benefit one or a small group of parks.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds:** Grants from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are available for a wide variety of projects. These funds are mainly used for projects and programs in the lower income areas of the community. Butte-Silver Bow has made use of CDBG funds for park projects in the past, and could continue to do so where these projects meet program goals.

**Superfund Settlement Funds:** The 2006 settlement of Superfund program claims with the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) includes redevelopment, reclamation and restoration funds to improve former mine sites and other resources impacted by mining operations. Along with capital funding for a specific set of projects, some of the areas of the settlement include management and maintenance funding. This funding is limited to the specified sites but will be applicable to many open space areas and historic resources added to the park system.

**General Obligation Bond:** These are voter-approved bonds with the assessment placed on real property. The money can only be used for capital improvements but not maintenance. This property tax is levied for a specified period of time (usually 15-20 years). Passage requires majority approval by the voters.

**Revenue Bonds:** These bonds are sold and paid from the revenue produced from the operation of a facility. These bonds are a good fit for improvements that will eventually involve user fees, such as community centers, swimming pools and some types of regional parks.

**Donations:** The donations of labor, land, or cash by service agencies, private groups or individuals are a popular way to raise small amounts of money for specific projects. Such service clubs such as Lions and Rotary often fund small projects such as playground improvements.

**Exchange or Sale of Property:** As recommended, the City-County should pursue sale of some surplus property. These small parcels are unlikely to raise large amounts of capital, however removing them from the maintenance rotation will save limited operating resources. Alternatively, if the City-County has an excess piece of property with some development value it could be traded for a private piece of property more suitable for park use.

**Joint Public/Private Partnership:** This concept has become increasingly popular for park and recreation agencies. The basic approach is for a public agency to enter into a working agreement with a private corporation to help fund, build, and/or operate a public facility. Generally, the three primary incentives that a public agency can offer is free land to place a facility (usually a park or other piece of public land), certain tax advantages and access to the facility. While the public agency may have to give up certain responsibilities or control, it is one way of obtaining public facilities at a lower cost.

**Public Land Trusts:** Private land trusts such as the Trust for Public Land, Inc. and the Nature Conservancy can acquire and hold land for eventual acquisition by a public agency.

**Government Grant Programs:** There are a number of government grant programs for park and recreation projects. Key programs are:

**a. Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient**

**Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users**

**(SAFETEA-LU):** Originally called The *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act* (ISTEA), this federal program has funded a wide variety of transportation-related projects. Funding is passed through the states. In 2005 the latest version of this legislation was authorized as SAFETEA-LU for the 5-year period of 2005-2009. In terms of recreation, the program primarily funds landscape and amenity improvements related to trail and transportation projects. The money can be used for both maintenance and capital



construction, and is primarily focused on regional systems and not local neighborhood trails.

- b. **Land and Water Conservation Funds:** This grant program is funded by the National Park Service and administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. In the past this was one of the major sources of grant money for local agencies. In the 1990s, funding at the federal level was severely cut, but in recent times more money has become available. The funds can be used for acquisition and development of outdoor facilities and requires a 50% match.
- c. **Urban Forestry Grants:** There are several grant programs that provide money for urban forestry projects. One is funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration and provides grants to purchase and plant trees. This program sometimes funds urban street tree planting programs.
- d. **US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW):** USFW may provide technical assistance and administer funding for projects that enhance water quality, including debris removal, flood mitigation, and enhancements to water crossings.
- e. **Tourism Infrastructure Improvement Program:** The Montana Department of Commerce administers this program for capital projects that include, but are not limited to, project construction costs associated with building new and/or remodeling or preserving existing tourism and recreation attractions, historical sites and artifacts; purchasing new and/or existing tourism and recreation attractions, historical sites and artifacts; and equipment purchased for specific tourism project operation. This program requires a 2:1 match and will not accept in-kind donations as matching funds.
- f. **Special Events Grant Program:** the Department of Commerce also administers this program to diversify and enrich Montana's tourism by developing new and enhancing existing community-based tourism festivals and events. The goal of SEGP is to create and sustain economic development through the advertising and promotion of "hallmark events."
- g. **Recreational Trails Program:** The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal grants program for trails. Grants are available to federal, state, and county agencies, sovereign Indian nations, private associations and clubs, but not individuals. Examples of eligible projects include urban trail development near homes and work places, basic front-and

backcountry-trail maintenance, restoration of areas damaged by trail use, development of trailside facilities, educational, and safety projects related to trails.

- h. **Montana Snowmobile Program:** The Montana Snowmobile Program, a state grants program for snowmobiling, is available to snowmobile clubs, organizations, and public land managing agencies, but not individuals. Examples of eligible projects include grooming of snowmobile trails, groomer maintenance sheds, bridges, signs, and plowing of snowmobile trailhead parking lots.
- i. **Off-Highway Vehicle Program:** The Off-Highway Vehicle Program, a state grants program for off highway vehicle trails, is available to public land managing agencies, private OHV clubs and other organizations, but not individuals. Examples of eligible projects include maintenance of existing OHV trails, signing, ethics education, noxious weed control adjacent to trails, enforcement, and route mapping.
- j. **Shooting Range Program:** The purpose of the Montana Shooting Range Grant Program is to create a continuing program and mechanism to provide funding, through the department, to private shooting clubs, private organizations, local governments, and school districts for the establishment and improvement of a system of shooting ranges throughout Montana.

**Private Grants and Foundations:** Grants and foundations provide money for a wide range of projects. They are sometimes difficult to find and equally difficult to secure because of the open competition. They usually fund unique projects or ones of extreme need.

## *FUNDING HISTORIC PROJECTS*

In addition to the traditional park funding sources, Butte-Silver Bow's park system offers many projects that will appeal to granting agencies and organizations interested in historic sites and buildings. The following sources could be considered for projects that celebrate the nationally relevant history of Butte and the "Richest Hill on Earth."

**Industrial Heritage Preservation Grants:** Offered by The Society for Industrial Archeology from \$1000 to \$3000 for the study, documentation, recordation, and/or preservation of significant

historic industrial sites, structures, and objects. Awards are made to nonprofit organizations and qualified individuals. Contributions of in-kind services, as well as cash resources from the sponsoring and cosponsoring agencies may qualify for matching purposes. Funds may be used for a range of projects including, but not limited to: increasing public awareness of preservation efforts, photography, videography, preparing inventories and developing measured drawings of extant significant industrial sites, structures, maritime facilities and industrial artifacts.

**Historic Preservation Fund:** Since 1970, the State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices have received approximately \$37 million in annual matching grants through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to assist in expanding and accelerating their historic preservation activities. Funding is used to pay part of the costs of staff salaries, surveys, comprehensive preservation studies, National Register nominations, educational materials, as well as architectural plans, historic structure reports, and engineering studies necessary to preserve historic properties. The All HPF-assisted activities must meet standards set by the Secretary of the Interior, and at least 10 percent of the allocations to the States are subgranted to assist Certified Local Governments for locally based activities.

**Save America's Treasures:** The Federal Save America's Treasures program is one of the largest and most successful grant programs for the protection of our nation's endangered and irreplaceable and endangered cultural heritage. Grants are available for preservation and/or conservation work on nationally significant intellectual and cultural artifacts and historic structures and sites. Intellectual and cultural artifacts include artifacts, collections, documents, sculpture, and works of art. Historic structures and sites include historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects. Grants are awarded to Federal, state, local, and tribal government entities, and non-profit organizations through a competitive matching-grant program, administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

Important partners in historic projects and grant applications would include:

- Butte Citizens for Preservation and Revitalization
- Mainstreet Uptown Butte
- Montana Preservation Alliance
- Montana Historical Society

The Butte-Silver Bow Historic Preservation Office is also certified as the "Certified Local Government" for many of the federal programs for historic preservation.

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## APPENDICES







Appendix A: Park and Facility Inventory		SPORTS FIELDS			OTHER ATHLETIC FACILITIES					OTHER PARK AMENITIES					AQUATIC FACILITIES	INDOOR FACILITIES			
		BASEBALL FIELD	FOOTBALL FIELD	SOCCER FIELD	BASKETBALL COURT	SKATE PARK	TENNIS COURT	VOLLEYBALL COURT	ICE SKATING RINK	GOLF COURSE	GROUP PICNIC AREA	HORSE-SHOES	PICNIC AREA	PLAY-GROUND	REST-ROOMS	POOL	GYM	WEIGHTS/FITNESS	OTHER FACILITIES
MINI PARKS																			
Cherokee Park	0.57				0.5									1					
Copper & Emmett	0.47													1					
Fleecer Park	0.35													1					
Granite & Henry	0.28				0.5									1					
Hanna Park	0.21				0.5									1					
Mandan Park	0.25													1					
Mural Park	0.19																		
Peace Park	0.11																		
People's Park	0.47				0.5				1										
Rock Park	0.14																		
Sioux Park	0.60				0.5														
Subtotal	3.64	0	0	0	2.5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS																			
Charley Judd Park	0.82				0.5		1						1	1					
Chester Steele Park	4.81				1.0								1	1					Wading Pool
Emma Park	1.67												1						
JFK Park	3.08												1	1					
McGruff\Manning Park	2.32												1	1					
Parrot Park	3.18					1													
Racetrack Park	1.24				0.5				1				1	1					
Subtotal	17.12	0	0	0	2.0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	5	0	0	0	0	
COMMUNITY PARKS																			
Clark Park	15.66				1.0			1			1				1				
Father Sheehan Park	21.00	6					4				1			1	1				
Stodden Park	116.82	3			1.0		6			1	1	1		2	1				Ampitheater
Subtotal	153.48	9	0	0	2.0	0	10	1	0	1	3	1	0	3	3	0	0	0	
SPECIAL USE AREAS																			
Antimony Field	0.47	1																	
Cinders Field	2.35	1																	
Civic Center Ball Field	3.02	2																	
Copper Mountain Youth Park	73.48	4	4					2		Driving Range	1			1	1				
Longfellow Field	4.88	5																	
Main & Center	0.11								1										
Missoula Gulch Ball Field	15.72	2												1					
Scown Park	0.84	1													1				
Skating Rink #1	0.57								1										
Skating Rink #2	0.27								1										
Skating Rink	0.31								1										
Subtotal	102.01	16	4	0	0.0	0	0	2	4	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	
NATURAL AREAS/GREENWAYS																			
Basin Creek County Park	42.45										1	1							
Blacktail Creek	9.45																		
Big Butte	309.44																		
Thompson/Eagles Nest Park	3,806.08																		
Subtotal	4,167.42	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
UNDEVELOPED PARKS																			
Mine Sites and Superfund Property	2,196.39																		
Undeveloped Park Property	47.86																		
Subtotal	2,244.25	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Butte-Silver Bow Subtotal	6,687.93	25	4		6.5	1	11	3	6	1	5	2	6	16	5	0	0	0	

Appendix A: Park and Facility Inventory																			
PARK NAME	ACREAGE	BASEBALL FIELD	FOOTBALL FIELD	SOCCER FIELD	BASKETBALL COURT	SKATE PARK	TENNIS COURT	VOLLEYBALL COURT	ICE SKATING RINK	GOLF COURSE	GROUP PICNIC AREA	HORSE-SHOES	PICNIC AREA	PLAY-GROUND	REST-ROOMS	POOL	GYM	WEIGHTS/FITNESS	OTHER FACILITIES
SCHOOLS AND OTHER FACILITIES																			
Butte Civic Center																	2	1	Multi-use room
MAC Center			1																
Central High School					1														
Butte High School			1														3	1	
East Middle School			1	2	1			2									2	1	400 meter track, 1 hand ball court, 1 auditorium
West Elementary School				1	1									1			1		Track around field, multipurpose room
Excelsior Tennis Courts							4												
Emerson Elementary School					1									1			1		
Hillcrest Elementary School					1									1			1		
Kennedy Elementary School					1									1			1		
Margaret Leary Elementary School														1			1		
Jeremy Bullock Soccer Fields				8															
Whittier Elementary School		1		2	1		2		1					1			1		
Montana Tech Stadium Complex		1	3		2		4									1		1	4 handball courts, multi prupose rooms
Walkerville Ball Field		1			0.5														
Koprivica Park		1			1.0			1						1					
Williamsburg														1					
MBMG Skating Rink #2									1										
Butte YMCA																1	1	1	Track, hot tub, steam room, multi purpose room, climbing wall
Knights of Columbus																	1	1	
Butte Country Club										1						1			1 handball court
Fairmont Hot Springs							2			1				1		2			2 hot pools
Subtotal	-	4	6	13	10.5	0	12	3	2	2	0	0	0	9	0	5	15	6	
Total	6,687.93	29	10	13	17	1	23	6	8	3	5	2	6	25	5	5	15	6	

Site	Park Type	Project	Description	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
N/A	N/A	Formation of a Park and Recreation Department	Reorganize the functions currently contributing to parks, trails, natural areas, historic and cultural sites, into a coordinated department.	✓		✓		✓
Stodden Park	Community Park	Renovation Master Plan	Develop a master plan for the entire park site that integrates existing golf course and sports facilities with new community-wide destination facilities.	✓		✓		✓
Chester Steele Park	Neighborhood Park	Water Feature	Replace wading pool with a interactive water feature.	✓	✓	✓		
Chester Steele Park	Neighborhood Park	Site Master Plan	Develop a master plan for the entire park site that integrates a new water feature into a plaza and outdoor social area.	✓				
Clark Park	Community Park	Upgrade ice rink	Develop an ice rink base that provides more utility to the community in the summer months, such as a skating/skateboarding surface or plaza.	✓		✓		
Clark Park	Community Park	Restroom/Warming Hut	Restroom/warming hut facility should be replaced in coordination with the upgrade of the ice surface and plaza space.	✓		✓		
Clark Park	Community Park	Water Feature	Consider this site for an interactive water feature, either as part of a plaza/ice surface or on its own.	✓				
Copper Mountain Youth Park	Special Use	Natural Trails	Develop several accessible, soft-surface trails in the southern portion of the site for walking and connecting the park to the neighborhood to the west along existing right of way.	✓	✓		✓	
Father Sheehan Park	Community Park	Tennis Court Rehabilitation	Resurface four tennis courts to restore competitive play.	✓		✓		
High Altitude Property	Undeveloped Park	Trail Connection	Develop a trail connection between Blacktail Creek natural area and the Continental Drive Trail.		✓			
Jeremy Bullock Soccer Fields	School Site	Field Irrigation	Assist the school district in irrigating the soccer complex to increase playable time and facilitate tournament play.	✓		✓		
Mine Lands Complex	Special Use	Indoor Playground	Utilize one of several existing historic structures to create an indoor play space that has features for multiple age groups.	✓		✓	✓	
Mine Lands Complex	Special Use	Reservoir Reuse	Add the obsolete reservoir site to the mine lands complex to preserve open space and connectivity between Big Butte and mine sites. Size of this parcel may create opportunities for larger types of facilities.		✓		✓	
Mine Lands Complex	Trail Connections	Enhance Historic Trail System	Continue to build connections between historic mine sites and related park and recreation amenities. Connections can be made both along existing streets, utilizing additional corridors, such as abandoned rights-of-way and natural features. Each head frame or significant mine site should be connected via looping trails to Uptown Butte and to Big Butte.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Site	Park Type	Project	Description	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
Neighborhood Ice Rinks	Multiple Special Use Sites	Park Future Decision	Engage the immediate neighbors of this park in a discussion about the future of these facilities. Try one year experiment of focusing on Clark Park ice and shutting down other neighborhood ice rinks.		✓			✓
Original Mine	Special Use	Water Feature	Develop an interactive water feature that complements the historic nature of the site and can be used as a plaza space with the water off.	✓		✓	✓	
Granite & Henry	Mini Park	Park Future Decision	Engage the immediate neighbors of this park in a discussion about the future of this park site.		✓			✓
People's Park	Mini Park	Park Future Decision	Engage the immediate neighbors of this park in a discussion about the future of this park site.		✓			✓
Rock Park	Mini Park	Park Future Decision	Engage the immediate neighbors of this park in a discussion about the future of this park site.		✓			✓
N/A	Regional Trails	Plan Connections and Develop Segments	Identify corridors, such as waterways and rights-of-way that could be used for trail links between the communities of Silver Bow county and beyond. Trails should be designed for multiple user groups and for all seasons.	✓	✓	✓		
Various	Backcountry Connections	Create Access	Develop backcountry connections between the trail system and the National Forests, Bureau of Land Management, and State owned lands surrounding the communities throughout Silver-Bow County. These could include trail connections, trailhead gateways or purchases of land that connect the City-County park system to other public lands.		✓	✓	✓	
N/A	Rural Community Park	Identify Sites and Assist in Planning and Development	As population growth dictates, identify appropriate central sites in communities outside of Butte for a park to serve the entire community. Provide assistance in planning and developing site while making arrangements with the local community for ongoing maintenance.	✓	✓			
N/A		Indoor Court Facility	Develop an indoor court facility that includes tennis courts in conjunction with other indoor recreation uses to maximize the use and efficiency of the facility. If considered in the Stodden Park planning process, indoor courts could be attached to a new golf club house.	✓	✓	✓		
N/A		Ropes/Challenge Course	Identify site for community partner interested in developing and operating a ropes/outdoor challenge course.	✓	✓	✓		
N/A		Tram Base	Connect the base of the proposed tramway to the Lady of the Rockies to the park and trail system.				✓	
N/A		Columbia Gardens Carousel	Identify a site for an independent operator to locate the restored carousel in a visitor friendly location.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Site	Park Type	Project	Description	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
N/A		ATV/Motorcycle Facility	Identify a site for organized ATV and Motorcycle activities in close proximity to Butte to promote authorized and legal use of vehicles.	✓		✓		
N/A		Dog Park	Identify a site at an existing park for a fenced, off-leash dog park.	✓		✓		
Butte Family YMCA	Private Site	Water Feature	Jointly develop adjacent water feature to provide outdoor water play at the YMCA site.	✓	✓	✓		
System-Wide		Competitive Field Safety Upgrades	Implement a program of competitive field upgrades, starting with the most degraded fields, to improve safety and playability.	✓		✓		✓
System-Wide		Playground Upgrades	Implement a program of playground upgrades to systematically replace out-of-date playgrounds with facilities that provide a variety of safe, accessible play opportunities.	✓				✓
System-Wide		Unified Identity Materials	Create a unified visual language and identity for Butte-Silver Bow parks, including historic sites, drawn from the existing materials created for the trail system and mine interpretation.				✓	✓
System-Wide		Interpretive Signage	Add informational signage that tells the story of all of the parks in the system and connects them to the community's history and culture.				✓	
System-Wide		Reservation System	Create a reservation system that addresses competitive fields, group picnic areas and other limited resources, along with a rate structure that (at a minimum) recovers the cost of administering the program.		✓			✓
System-Wide		Restroom Lock Replacement	Replace locks on all restrooms with time activated locks to allow access during park operating hours.		✓			
Thompson Park	Natural Area	Ongoing Collaboration	Continue to redevelop Thompson Park with the National Forest Service.		✓			✓
U1	Neighborhood Park	Develop Local Park Amenities	Integrate local park amenities such as a play area, picnic sites or small scale sports facility into an appropriate redeveloped mine site. Use the history of the site as a theme for the park.	✓	✓		✓	
U2	Neighborhood Park	Monitor	This area is currently served by Koprivica Park, as long as this park remains well maintained and open to the public no additional site is needed.		✓			✓
U3	Neighborhood Park	Acquire Site/Master Plan/Develop/Maintain	Identify a site for a neighborhood park with special attention to crossings of Montana Street to make access as easy as possible. Master plan and develop site according to the design guidelines and add resources to the maintenance budget for this site.	✓	✓	✓		
U4	Neighborhood Park	Develop Existing Park Site	Master Plan and develop "C Street" property according to design guidelines and add resources to the maintenance budget for this site.	✓	✓	✓		



Site	Park Type	Project	Description	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
U5	Neighborhood Park	Acquire Site/Master Plan/Develop/Maintain	Identify a site for a neighborhood park. Master plan and develop site according to the design guidelines and add resources to the maintenance budget for this site.	✓	✓	✓		
U6	Community Park	Site Master Plan	Develop a site master plan for a new community park with areas for outdoor activities, natural play and special facilities.	✓		✓	✓	✓
U6	Community Park	Hang Glider Landing Site	Include an open natural field with no obstructions in the master plan and development of this park site to accommodate hang glider use.	✓		✓		
U6	Community Park	Fishing Pond	Include a fishing pond with accessible pier in the master plan and development of this site.	✓		✓		
U6	Community Park	Develop and Maintain Site	Develop site according to the master plan and design guidelines and add resources to the maintenance budget for this site.	✓	✓			
U7	Special Use/Neighborhood Park	Develop Local Park Amenities	Develop corner of Longfellow field area to serve local park access needs. If enough space can not be identified, acquire, design and develop an additional park site in this area.		✓	✓		
U8	Neighborhood Park	Acquire Site/Master Plan/Develop/Maintain	Identify a site for a neighborhood park (the undeveloped property at the freeway interchange is not appropriate). Master plan and develop site according to the design guidelines and add resources to the maintenance budget for this site.	✓	✓	✓		
U9	Natural Area/Neighborhood Park	Develop Local Park Amenities	Determine if Blacktail Creek natural area has capacity for a natural themed play area and park amenities to serve this relatively isolated neighborhood.	✓	✓	✓		
U10	Neighborhood Park	Master Plan/Develop/Maintain	Determine suitability of undeveloped park land for new park site. Master plan and develop site according to the design guidelines and add resources to the maintenance budget for this site. Connect this site to proposed trail parallel to railroad right-of-way.	✓	✓	✓		
U11	Neighborhood Park	Acquire Site/Master Plan/Develop/Maintain	Identify a site for a neighborhood park. Master plan and develop site according to the design guidelines and add resources to the maintenance budget for this site.	✓	✓	✓		
U12	Neighborhood Park	Master Plan/Develop/Maintain	Determine suitability of undeveloped park land for new park site. Master plan and develop site according to the design guidelines and add resources to the maintenance budget for this site. Connect this site to proposed trails on Continental Drive and Harrison.	✓	✓	✓		

## PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design and development guidelines are intended to provide planning and site programming guidance and direction. Because site conditions and characteristics vary these guidelines are not intended to override site specific concerns or judgments. For example, during the design of a specific park, if community preferences differ from the guidelines but are consistent with park function and the overall guidance of the Plan, citizen preferences should take precedence.

For each park classification, these guidelines provide a description of the classification, considerations for site selection, features to provide, amenities to consider, and features to avoid (if any).

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks are located within walking and bicycling distance of most users. These parks are generally three to five acres in size and also serve residents within a ¼-mile walking distance. Neighborhood parks provide access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents, enhance neighborhood identity and preserve neighborhood open space. Neighborhood parks often include amenities such as playgrounds, basketball courts, turf areas, picnic tables, and benches.

#### *Site Selection:*

- Neighborhood park sites should be 5 to 10 acres in size. The minimum size for neighborhood parks is 3 acres when land constraints do not allow a larger site.
- At least 50% of a neighborhood park site should be suitable for active uses.
- The site should have good visibility from surrounding streets and have a minimum of 200' of street frontage.
- The site should be relatively central to the area it is intended to serve (within about ½ mile of the intended users).
- The site should be accessible by walking, bicycling, or driving. Connections to the community trail network should be provided, where possible, to facilitate walking and bicycling. Sidewalks should be provided.

#### *Minimum Park Features to Include:*

- Playground equipment.
- Picnic area with shelter.
- Open lawn area, minimum 75' x 100'.
- Multi-use field.

- Paved courts (minimum 1 basketball or 2 tennis courts).
- Interior accessible path (paved route connecting all site elements).
- Water fountain.
- Site furnishings (benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, signs, etc.).
- Restrooms (permanent structure).

#### *Additional Park Features to Consider:*

- Sports fields for baseball, softball, or soccer.
- Skate park or skate facilities.
- Sand or grass volleyball courts.
- Other sporting facilities (horseshoes, bocce, lawn bowling, etc.).
- Water playground.
- Community gardens.
- Off-leash dog area.
- Open space area interpretation (if features are present on the site).
- Other features in keeping with the function of neighborhood parks.

#### *Park Features to Avoid:*

- Regional-scale facilities (large sports complex, community center, etc.).

## COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are planned to provide opportunities for structured or active, and passive or informal recreation. Community parks generally include facilities that attract people from the entire community, such as pools, lighted fields and recreation centers. As destinations, these sites require support facilities, such as parking and restrooms. These parks may also include significant open space areas and trails. The minimum size of community parks is generally 15 to 20 acres. Community parks with large facilities, such as golf courses, or extensive open space areas may be considerably larger.

### *Site Selection:*

- Community parks should be a minimum of 15 to 20 acres.
- The site should be accessible by walking, bicycling, or driving. Connections to the community trail network should be provided, where possible, to facilitate walking and bicycling. Sidewalks should be provided. Connections to the community transit system are also important.
- The site should have good visibility from surrounding streets and have a minimum of 200' of street frontage.

### *Minimum Park Features:*

- Restrooms (permanent structure).
- Playground equipment with separate areas appropriate for different age groups.
- Picnic area with shelter.
- Open lawn area, minimum 75' x 100'.
- Sports fields for baseball, softball, or soccer (artificial turf and field lighting subject to site conditions), fields may be in complexes within the park.
- Paved courts (minimum one basketball or two tennis courts).
- Interior accessible path (paved route connecting all site elements).
- Water fountain(s).
- Site furnishings (benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, signs, etc.).
- Parking, on or off-street of approximately 25 spaces per developed field and an additional two to three spaces per acre of developed park land.

### *Additional Park Features to Consider:*

- Skate park or skate facilities.
- Multi-use field.
- Sand or grass volleyball courts.

- Other sporting facilities (horseshoes, bocce, lawn bowling, etc.).
- Water playground.
- Community gardens.
- Off-leash dog area.
- Open space area interpretation (if features are present on the site).
- Performance space, such as a stage area or band shell.
- Other features in keeping with the function of community parks.

*Park Features to Avoid:*

- Features that detract from or conflict with the community park uses.
- Regional-scale facilities (water park, convention center, etc.).

## RURAL COMMUNITY PARKS

These parks provide community park facilities for residents residing in outlying communities in Silver Bow County or unincorporated areas.

### *Typical Park Users:*

- Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle or foot.
- Visit the park for one hour to more than four hours.
- May be the only park for many miles

### *Size*

- 5 to 50+ acres.

### *Site Selection*

- Site size should be a minimum of 55 acres in size and should be sufficient to accommodate at least basic features or amenities as determined by the community it will serve.
- Access to site should be provided by a significant local street.
- Site should be acquired based on its capacity to provide access to unique features such as trail access or open space areas.

### *Amenities to Provide*

- Appropriate site furnishings, including benches and bicycle storage.
- General landscape improvements (including tree planting).
- Permanent restrooms.
- On- or off-street parking to accommodate the planned use of the site (if scheduled fields are provided, consider 50 spaces per field).
- Multi-use and pedestrian trail (maybe be looped pathway system).
- Open space areas/greenspace.
- Picnic areas, may include shelters and be able to accommodate larger groups (50+ people).
- Tot and youth playground equipment.

### *Amenities to Consider*

- Community gathering and event space.
- Expanded utility and electrical service to support community events.



- Storage or maintenance buildings (if visible they should be architecturally compatible with other park elements or screened from view if they are exterior work areas).
- Water features.
- Fishing areas.
- Dog parks.
- Designated sports fields for baseball, soccer and/or softball (may include lighting).
- Designated sports courts for volleyball, tennis and/or basketball (full or half court).
- Other sporting facilities (horseshoe pit, disc golf, etc.).
- Open turf for unstructured play.

## SPECIAL USE AREAS

Special use areas are freestanding specialized use facilities, such as community centers, aquatic centers, sports complexes, boat ramps, historic areas or skate parks. Since special use areas vary widely in function, there are no minimum sizes. However, special use areas must be large enough to accommodate the intended use. Support facilities, such as parking and restrooms, are often included.

### *Site Selection:*

- Site size should be adequate to support the proposed specialized use, as well as necessary supporting facilities, including parking.
- Site selection criteria will be dependent on the specific specialized use proposed, and may include criteria determined through an economic feasibility study.
- The site should be accessible from the communitywide trail system.
- Prior to the addition of any special use areas, the City-County should prepare a detailed cost/benefit analysis and maintenance impact statement for each proposed site being considered.

### *Minimum Park Features to Include:*

- Specialized use facility (indoor or outdoor).
- Site furnishings (benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, signs, etc.) appropriate for the intended scale and use of the park.
- Restrooms (permanent structure).
- Parking, on or off-street.

### *Additional Park Features to Consider:*

- Additional features and amenities that support the primary special use on the site. These could include:
  - Playground equipment.
  - Open lawn area.
  - Picnic area with shelter.
  - Multi-use fields.
  - Sports fields for baseball, softball, or soccer.
  - Skate park or skate facilities.
  - Sand or grass volleyball courts.
  - Other sporting facilities (horseshoes, bocce, lawn bowling, etc.).
  - Water playground.
  - Community gardens.

- Off-leash dog area.
- Open space area interpretation (if features are present on the site).
- Concessions, vendor, or lease space.

*Park Features to Avoid:*

- Features that conflict with or detract from the site's specialized use.

## OPEN SPACE AREAS

Open space areas are permanent, undeveloped green spaces which are managed for both their natural value, as well as for recreational use. Open space areas and greenways can be of any size, and may include wetlands, wildlife habitats or stream corridors. Open space areas provide opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as bird-watching and environmental education. These parks may preserve or protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as unique/endangered plant species. Other types of open space areas provide for access and enjoyment of forest lands and other natural features. Greenways are often linear in nature, following natural or man-made corridors, such as creeks and abandoned railways.

### *Site Selection:*

- Site size should be based on natural resource and connectivity needs.
- Public use of natural open space sites should be encouraged through trails, viewpoints, and other features, but environmentally sensitive areas should be protected.
- The site should have access to a public street, to public land, or contribute to the planned open space network.
- Features in natural open space areas should be limited to those appropriate for the numbers and types of visitors the area can accommodate, while retaining its resource value, natural character, and the intended level of solitude.

### *Minimum Park Features to Include:*

- Trails.
- Site furnishings (benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, signs, etc.) appropriate for the intended scale and use of the open space area.

### *Additional Park Features to Consider:*

- Trailhead or entry kiosk.
- Interpretive signage or exhibits.
- Viewpoints.
- Parking, on or off-street.
- Restrooms.
- Picnic area with shelter.
- Outdoor classroom/gathering space.
- Interpretive center or building.
- Environmental restoration areas.

*Park Features to Avoid:*

- Features that conflict with or detract from the site's natural resources, such as turf, ornamental plantings, and active uses such as sports fields.

## REGIONAL TRAILS (INCLUDING TRAILHEADS)

Trails can be designed for single or multiple types of users.

Conceptual regional trails in the Butte-Silver Bow Comprehensive Park, Trails and Open Space Plan are recreational and single- to multiple-use in nature. Sidewalks and on-street bike routes which emphasize transportation are not addressed in this plan.

Typical regional trail users:

- Come from throughout Silver Bow County and the region, with a smaller number coming from other portions of the state and beyond.
- Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle or foot.
- Visit the trail for one hour to more than four hours.

### *Size*

- 2 ft to 6ft for single use trails.
- 8 ft to 14 ft for multiple use trails.

### *Site Selection*

- Wherever possible, trails should be placed on existing public lands, e.g., parks, undeveloped rights-of-way, easements, etc.
- Trail alignments should take into account soil conditions, steep slopes, surface drainage and other physical limitations.
- Routes should be located for construction and maintenance cost efficiency, while taking into account the need to provide a quality experience for the trail user.
- Multi-use trails should be located on existing former roadways, circulation networks or in previously developed areas whenever feasible.
- Trailheads should be located near public transportation stops.

### *Amenities to Provide*

- Trails should be designed with grades ranging from flat to steep to provide trail users with a variety of challenges and access.
- Trails should be developed in compliance with ADAAG guidelines on trail accessibility, unless the trail is specifically designed to provide users with challenges.
- Trails should be planned, sized, and designed for non-motorized multiple uses, except for dedicated nature trails, and/or areas that cannot be developed to the standard necessary to minimize potential user conflicts.



- Trails should be developed throughout the County and individual communities to provide linkages to schools, parks and other destination points.
- Consider trail surface based on trail's intended use. Soft (permeable) trails include soil, crushed rock, sand, mulch and rubber-based paving. Hardened surfaces include asphalt (permeable or impermeable), concrete, crushed rock or soil stabilized with resin products or cement, and open or solid masonry such as brick, "turf-block" or other cast concrete products. Other hard surfaces include boardwalks, bridges, steel grates or plates.
- Surfaces should be designed to encourage users to stay on trails, avoid erosion, and to maintain soil cover over tree and other plant roots.
- Trailheads should have secure bicycle parking and trash receptacles.
- Wayfinding kiosks, with orientation and interpretive information at trailheads.

### *Amenities to Consider*

- Trail location, connections and orientation should encourage users to walk or bicycle to the trail.
- Depending upon the expected and desired level of use, parking may be required at particular trailheads. Secondary trailheads require 3+ parking spaces, whereas primary trailheads may have 20 or more parking spaces. A percentage of parking spaces should be reserved for persons with disabilities.
- Trails should be looped and interconnected when possible to provide a variety of trail lengths and destinations. They should link various parts of the community, as well as existing park sites.
- Where feasible and appropriate, a planted or constructed buffer should separate trails from roadways.
- While off-street routes are preferable, in some cases trails may be routed on existing streets. In these cases, the pathway should be designed to minimize potential conflicts between motorists and trail users.
- Developers should be encouraged to provide pathways through proposed developments, where such improvements would provide needed linkages between planned trail routes and other public destinations.
- Standard trail signs with information regarding trail conditions and degrees of difficulty.

- Access to drinking water at trailheads.
- Benches or other places to sit at trailheads with thought to locating them near scenic viewpoints or overlooks.

### *Amenities to Avoid*

- Wherever appropriate, recreation trails should not be part of a street roadway.

## TRAIL SAFETY

The ideal trail is planned and designed with safety considerations taken into account. There are two issues involving safety concerning trail users. One is danger due to normal trail use, and the other is personal safety of users.

A number of methods can be implemented to increase the safety of trails to users. Some of these are outlined below:

- **Open and Visible Trails:** If trail guidelines are followed, the resulting trails will provide open and visible corridors to both users and law enforcement personnel. Visibility increases a person's sense of safety.
- **Safe Design:** If deemed necessary, techniques such as emergency call boxes, lighting, security vehicle access, and landscaping can be designed can be installed to increase safety.
- **Reduction of Trail Conflicts:** A number of problems occur on multi-use trails where two types of users are interacting. Good design, signage, and awareness of trail etiquette all reduce problems associated with these conflicts.
- **Coordination with Public Safety:** By making area law enforcement and public safety officials aware of trail routes, trailheads, and potential problem areas, they can develop emergency response plans and a method of policing the area the most efficiently.
- **Bicycle Patrols:** These patrols, made up of police or volunteers, can provide security on the trails. In addition to safety, patrols can provide information, offer bicycle safety checks, and do other service duties. Overall, the most important part is providing "eyes" on the trail system to reduce potential problems.

- **Organized Programs:** The City can set up programs of volunteer guides to accompany those who wish to use a specific segment as a group. This can either be on a specific request basis or be integrated into the recreation programs. Organized programs, such as a special event nature walk, increase “eyes” on the trail.
- **Adopt-A-Trail Program:** Through an adopt-a-trail program, private groups, organizations, or individuals are encouraged to adopt trail segments or corridors by volunteering or providing donations for maintenance and development.
- **Neighborhood Trail Watch Program:** Through a neighborhood trail watch program, property owners adjacent to trails can be encouraged to monitor nearby trails and report maintenance or operation problems to the City, and to report vandalism or other inappropriate activity to the Police Department.